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OLD AND NEW;

OR,

TASTE *VERSUS* FASHION



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J.A. O'Neill, N.Y.

Ever truly yours
Mary Anne Sadlier

OLD AND NEW;

OR,

TASTE VERSUS FASHION.

BY

MRS. J. SADLIER.

AUTHOR OF THE "BLAKES AND FLANAGANS"—"NEW LIGHTS"—

"BESSY CONWAY"—"CONFEDERATE CHIEFTAINS"—

&C., &C., &C.

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OLD AND NEW;

OR,

TASTE *VERSUS* FASHION.

CHAPTER I.

MATTERS APPERTAINING TO THE WORLD OF FASHION.

SOME five or six years ago there stood in one of the "up-town" streets crossing the avenues, and but a few doors from one of them, a two-story brick house, which, in a less pretentious neighborhood, would have passed for a tolerably decent dwelling, which rank it once indubitably held. Unluckily for the peace and contentment of its occupants, two brown-stone houses, one of three, and the other of no less than four stories, had provokingly reared themselves on either side, throwing our humble "two-story brick" altogether into the shade. Had they been plain houses the matter had not been quite so bad, but their respective owners were not men to put up plain houses; one of them was a butcher, and the other a baker in the vicinity, who having catered for the creature-comforts of the public to some pur-

pose, found themselves in possession of bank-books representing a good round sum in hard specie. The money was vested in two of the oldest and *safest* banks in the city, the butcher's book aforesaid bearing on its cover the responsible name of the *Chemical*, whilst the baker's displayed the equally well-accredited name of the *Mechanics'* Bank. This was very well and very safe, and all that, but all at once he of the *Chemical* took it into his head that a bank-book wasn't much to look at, after all, and so he began to open his ear to the persuasive accents of his wife and daughters who had been long urging him to build a house for them. He had held out manfully for a year or two after the last of his six daughters came home from boarding-school freighted with the usual load of "accomplishments," but at last the seven "feminines" came down on him with the parallel case (fished from the items of a daily paper) of "some old foggy somewhere or another that had a whole mint of money framed up in his parlor in a bank-bill." The butcher had never read of the amiable patriarch of English literati,* who, in our own day, so far broke the charm that makes poverty and literary pursuits all but synonymous, but there was no getting over the triumphant argument adduced by the "Seven Champions:" "What earthly use was that bill to that old fellow, and

* The late Samuel Rogers, who, as is well-known, had a million-pound-note of the Bank of England framed (I believe) in his drawing-room.

wasn't it just the same with *his* little book? Wouldn't it be better for him to have the money in the walls of a nice house that would be a credit to himself and his family after him?" The butcher gave in, the *Chemical* had its deposits lessened by twenty thousand dollars, but the house went up in a style of splendor befitting the ambitious pretensions of the family to whose "credit" it was to rebound *in perpetuo*. The progress of this new neighbor, destined to rejoice in the round number of 66—was watched with awful interest by the inmates of the two-story brick, 68 by number, and as pediment, and architrave, and balcony arose, tier after tier, decked with all the elaboration of the stone-cutter's craft, the female occupants of 68, three in number, keeping watch in their turn from behind their carefully-closed *jalousies*, noted with doleful discontent the growing splendors of the mansion. "It was really too bad," the young ladies said—they were three motherless sisters—"too bad that no spot in the city would serve those up-setting Gallaghers to put up their castle on but that vacant lot next to *them*. Wasn't it well come up with Tom Gallagher and his daughters when nothing less than *that* would do them? It's a wonder they wouldn't be ashamed." So said the three Miss Hacketts, and they said it in one way or another "from morn till dewy eve," but especially and most emphatically when any acquaintance dropped in. What made the matter worse was that the six Miss Gallaghers

and the three Miss Hacketts had been all at school together in various combinations corresponding to the respective ages of the young ladies. The rivalry which, as a matter of course, commenced in school with regard to dress, pocket-money, and other appurtenances, had been persistently and spiritedly maintained on either side since the ever-memorable day when the two junior Miss Gallaghers and Miss Mary Clementina Hackett had graduated with equal honor and distinguished success at a first-class and very fashionable boarding-school. Although the Hacketts were far behind the Gallaghers in point of wealth, the difference was not so perceptible, and, therefore, not at all so sensibly felt so long as the worthy butcher thought fit to tenant his family in the upper stories of a house near the market where he carried on his lucrative business, but when the new house came to be put up, and *such* a house! at their own very door—of course, that was more than flesh and blood could bear, and the three Miss Hacketts *being* flesh and blood did *not* bear it—at least with anything like equanimity. If *their* father had been in circumstances to put up just such another house, or one a shade better, then, indeed, the Gallaghers might put up a palace if they pleased, but unfortunately the head of the Hackett family was a man on whom the blind goddess had never deigned to smile. The three good-looking sisters who called him father, and one pale, delicate boy, the youngest of all, con-

stituted the bulk of his worldly wealth. At least the couple of thousand dollars which he had been able to save out of a small grocery was not much to reckon on, especially as, with all the good man's care and economy, it did not seem to increase of late years. He had managed by the help of thrifty, industrious wife to give what they called a good education to their daughters, foreseeing that he would have little else to leave them. Many sacrifices did the good parents make in order to spare from their small business the very considerable sum annually expended on the girls' "schooling," and the hard toil to which the fond proud mother devoted herself year after year to save the expense of keeping a servant soon wore out a naturally-delicate constitution. The eldest daughter was but a few months home from school after "finishing" when she lost her good, but too indulgent mother. Things never went so well after that, and poor Henry Hackett, after a couple of years' experience, gave up with a sigh the hope of adding to the sum that had been standing opposite his name for some time past in the Savings Bank of his own ward. He and his son Michael attended the store, but the Miss Hacketts did *not* attend the house—small as it was, they had to keep a servant, for, of course, it was a thing altogether out of the question for young ladies who could play the piano, and read French (at least they said so), and paint, oh! such nice flowers, and work most beautifully in

Berlin wool, to undertake the work of a house, and turn their attention to such vulgar practices as the making of beds, cooking of victuals, knitting or darning stockings, or any of those tiresome minutiae which belong to the housekeeping of a family in straitened circumstances. It was quite a great deal for such accomplished young ladies to do what they chose to call "a part of the sewing," which *part* mainly consisted of the hemming of pocket-handkerchiefs, making *crochet* collars, embroidering aprons and other such "fancy jobs," whilst the plain sewing (as it is technically called by housekeepers), the underclothes, and all that excluded taste and fancy, and required patience and perseverance, being simultaneously voted "a bore," was handed over to a seamstress taken in at stated times. It was no use for Henry Hackett to scold or complain—the three sisters were all of one mind and all arrayed against him in formidable volubility of tongue. One had to practice—she was really forgetting her music; another had to finish that piece she was painting for "the fair;" the other had some wax fruit in hands, and declared solemnly she wouldn't do *a thing*—not a thing, till that was finished; for, of course, it must be ready for New Year's—or where was the use bothering with it? The father, though a sensible and rather intelligent man, was somewhat too easy, and often gave up a point against his own honest convictions rather than take the trouble of arguing the question—least

of all with his daughters. There was a half smile on his calm features as he listened to the eager chorus of excuse :

“ You mean,” said he, but there he stopped : he was going to say “ you mean you’re all too busy watching Tom Gallagher’s new house to find time for anything else.” He didn’t *say* it, though, knowing by dear-bought experience that to raise a storm was easier than to quell it.

From what we have said, it is plain enough that the Miss Hacketts had no hope of ever seeing their humble “ two-story brick ” expanding, or being transformed into a three-story brown either plain or ornamental—if they had, the barbed shaft of envy would not have penetrated their hearts so deeply, but, as it was, they could only blame their hard fortune—and “ them upsetting things, the Gallaghers.” The only real consolation they had in their affliction was that their neighbor on the other side, No. 70, was a wooden building no higher than their own, and in much worse condition, the lower part being occupied as a carpenter’s shop, while the carpenter’s family lived up stairs. Even this slender ray of comfort was soon clouded : a small square board covered with white paper was one morning hung over the door, and on it, in frightfully large letters, the ominous words *FOR SALE—this property for sale.*

This new source of anxiety in some measure diverted the young ladies’ attention from the other side, and they lived for some weeks in a state of

harrowing suspense, alternating between fear and hope—*fear* that some aspiring individual from “down-town” or elsewhere might take it in head to put up another fashionable residence on No. 70—*hope* that the poor old tenement might be left as it was and used as a place of business. Alas! the hope was soon dispelled, and the fear became a dread and awful certainty. The old house was pulled down, and from the magnitude of the preparations immediately set on foot it was clear that the new proprietor was going to make No. 70 outdo No. 66. What, then, was to become of the Hacketts in their unlucky “two-story brick,” right between two palatial mansions of brown stone? It is beyond our poor ability to describe the sensations with which the sisters three watched the progress of No. 70, keeping an eye at the same time on the gorgeous “finishing” of 66, as indicated by the protracted labors of stucco-men, painters, gilders, glass-stainers and upholsterers. To crown all they found that the new owner of No. 70 was their own baker, Mr. William H. Fogarty, whose only daughter Julia had also been their school-companion!

What made the young ladies’ affliction still more pitiable was that they were forced to compress it within the limits of their own fair bosoms. They well knew how little sympathy they had to expect from their father, or rather their “pa,” who was certainly “the queerest man living, and had no more spirit than a coal-heaver”—so they said:—as for their bro-

ther Michael he would only laugh at their distress, they knew that well, too, for Michael, notwithstanding his pale, melancholy visage, had quite a fund of dry humor in his composition, and generally contrived to give a ridiculous turn to the things that most interested his sisters. Sometimes he affected to condole with them in their tribulation of spirit, but it was only to draw them out and furnish matter for his own private amusement. A quaint, precocious little fellow Michael was, undoubtedly, and to do him justice, he had more brains in his head than his three sisters put together. The share of good sense that belonged to the family was about equally divided between the father and son, the trifling advantage which the latter might possibly have, being counterbalanced by the former's fifty odd years of additional experience. Michael's talents, such as they were, had received comparatively little aid from education; the poor lad was taken from school at fourteen, when his mother died, and his services were found so indispensable in the store that his father felt himself under the necessity of keeping him there, the more so as he himself was often absent for hours at a time attending auction sales "down town." It was not without regret that Henry Hackett thus sacrificed his son's opportunities of acquiring that knowledge which, after all, is power, and he reproached himself—very unjustly, however, with "making the boy a slave to them good-for-nothing girls of his, and keeping *him* from

getting the learning that might make a man of him ; because he had the head to keep it, if he got it, and the sense to make good use of it, not all as one !

The last words somehow had the effect of putting the sisters into that portentous state, commonly called " high dudgeon," elevating their noses to a perfect " snub," and bringing their " brent brows" into most unseemly proximity. If there was any one domestic topic that grated on the sensitive ears of the Miss Hacketts more than another, it was the enumeration of Michael's good qualities on the part of their respected parent, and the Jeremiad thereto appended concerning the undue share of labor and application that necessarily devolved on him, partly as a consequence of other people's gadding propensities and general dislike of anything approaching to industry. The girls found three caps in this brief homily that fitted themselves to a hair, and they were not slow in appropriating them ; whereupon the waters of domestic peace were grievously troubled until some concession from the father, or, just as often, the assumption of a little salutary severity, restored a temporary calm. So much for *domestic* affairs, but the *foreign* were, after all, what most disturbed the Hackett family and inflicted the deepest wound on their heart of hearts. Everything that was from within could and might be tolerated ; " pa's stinginess" and " Michael's odd ways" (including, of course, his provoking industry), inasmuch as they couldn't be got over, had to be put

up with, but to think of the Gallaghers and the Fogartys building such splendid houses right on each side of them; and what harm if they—the Miss Hacketts, that is—had only a decent house—if they had, they wouldn't care “a snap”—as they elegantly phrased it—but such an old rookery of a place, old faded bricks, and common white shutters! and only *two stories high*!—why, really, the house wasn't fit to be seen—it was a show to the world—and, they didn't care, if pa had only the least little mite of spirit he wouldn't have his daughters in such a mean place.

“And us finished and home from school!” suggested Ann Wilhelmina, the second.

“Just so,” chimed in Mary Clementina, the youngest, while Sarah Eugenia, the eldest, added again by way of capping the climax:

“And us keeping but one girl, and there *they'll* be having two or three, or perhaps four.”

“And all the fashionable ladies and gents that'll be coming to visit them in those grand houses, and us hasn't a soul to come in or out that there's the least bit of style about. Oh *dear*! a'nt it shocking! what *shall* we do?”

“I'll tell you what it is,” said Ann Wilhelmina lowering her voice to a confidential whisper, “pa's real mean, after all, or he'd get some improvements made on this old shanty—it wouldn't cost him much to do *that*!”

“I guess not,” responded the eldest sister, “but

then it a'nt any use to ask him, you know; he'd only get mad and tell us to hold our tongue and put such notions out of our head! Oh dear! what a misfortune it is to have such an old grub of a father!"

Having delivered themselves of this dutiful sentiment, the sisters heaved a simultaneous sigh and went their ways, Sarah Eugenia to tell Nora, their maid-of-all-work, to "get the tea," Ann Wilhelmina to finish James' last novel (poor G. P. R. was then in the zenith of his fame, or a little beyond it), whilst Mary Clementina with a languid yawn took up her frame with the heroic purpose of trying to finish "that nasty leaf" of which she was so heartily tired, and little wonder, seeing that she had been at it off and on for the last three days consecutively.

It may be well to observe *en passant*—lest the reader should give Henry Hackett and his son credit for more patience than fell to their lot—that the imposing cognomens by which the girls chose to address each other were considerably abridged in the mouths of their male relatives. The fact was that the second names borne by each of the young ladies were not baptismal nor yet confirmation names, being simply what is called fancy-names, dating from an early stage of their boarding-school days. With "pa" and Michael, the girls were still—to their unspeakable annoyance—the *Sally*, *Ann* and *Mary* of their first years; and, still more shocking to relate, there were times when their father actually forgot

himself so far as to hail them with the odious patronymies of Sal, Nancy, or Moll—that, too, before company. If he would only

“Behave himsel’ before folk”

they might have forgiven him, but to expose his vulgarity in such a way when strangers were present, and give *them* such nasty low names—that they could not, and would not get over—for what *could* folks think of the whole connection hearing the head of the house talk in that fashion? Sometimes Michael affected to sympathize with them, and even went so far as to remonstrate with his father on his total disregard of the young ladies’ feelings. Certain looks and gestures were exchanged between the two, and both promised amendment. Unluckily, the aggrieved parties were not long in finding out that the amendment was no amendment at all, and that, in fact, the cure was worse than the disease. The very first time that company came in of an evening—and as ill luck would have it, who should the visitors be but their new neighbors the Fogartys, father, mother and daughter—what was the consternation of the trio to hear themselves addressed by their father and brother as often as they had occasion to speak to them as “Miss Sarah Eugenia,” “Miss Ann Wilhelm-na” and “Miss Mary Cle-men-ti-na!” Every syllable and every letter being brought out with the full round articulation of the soft Munster accent.

Had the Fogartys been less kind and considerate

than they really were the Hackett sisters would have suffered excruciating torture during the evening—as it was they “felt like sinking through the ground” as often as they heard the ominous length of name repeated—which happened they thought unusually often, too—they didn’t make the descent, however, to which they felt inclined, but remained above ground to endure, though it must be owned with a very ill grace, the punishment of their own folly.

The Fogartys were at first disposed to laugh heartily at what they naturally supposed this new whim of Henry Hackett’s, but when that worthy man apprised them by a knowing wink, accompanied by an expressive gesture, of the corrective object of the ludicrously-long names, they made an effort to maintain their gravity, and succeeded so well that one would think they heard nothing strange going on. The confusion of the three sisters was truly pitiable under the first half-hour’s infliction, but after that, finding that their really good-natured visitors either took, or appeared to take, no notice of the parental vagary, they gradually recovered something like their usual confidence, and played and sang to their own unbounded satisfaction, and, indeed, to the great admiration of their father and brother, who were reasonably proud of their accomplishments.

The Fogartys had not yet moved into their new house at which, they said, there was a good three

months' work yet before they could begin to furnish it.

"I tell you what it is, Henry," said William H., a sharp, thin-faced man, with a suspiciously-black and curled head of hair, by no means in keeping with the fifty-five or perhaps sixty years indicated by the deep lines of his somewhat peculiar countenance, "I'll tell you what it is, it's no joke to put up a house like that in New York City."

"And then the furnishing of it after that again," said Hackett; "you must have done a first-rate business to put so much money together—and you're a young man yet, Mr. Fogarty!"

"Not so young as you'd think," put in Mrs. Fogarty rather quickly; "there's some people bears their age so well that you can scarce tell when age is *on* them—but you may take my word for it, Billy Fogarty is no chicken."

"Chicken or no chicken, ma'am, he's no *goose* anyhow," said Hackett with sly meaning, "if he was he wouldn't be the man he is to-day!"

"To-night, father," suggested Michael.

"Well! night or day, it's all one in regard to what I'm saying, Michael! Nobody can deny but Mr. Fogarty was born with a silver spoon in his mouth."

"Much about his silver spoon," said his wife again, "if it wasn't for the good help he had, I'd like to see how far his silver spoon would carry him!"

"God knows you say the truth, Ellen," said

Fogarty turning a softened look on his wife, "I had the best of help, and that's a fact. I made the money, it's true, but I know who kept it together when it *was* made." "Well! Billy, my dear, we both did our share," said the wife complacently, "and God has prospered our little endeavors. But you must know, Mr. Hackett, *I* didn't give Fogarty the first start—he had a nice penny by him when we came together."

"Dear me!" said Miss Sarah Eugenia Hackett very innocently, "I shouldn't have thought it?"

Her sisters tittered in evident appreciation of the joke, Julia Fogarty looked grave, her father pulled up his shirt-collar with an air, but the good woman herself answered with perfect composure and in perfect good faith :

"I declare I often wonder how he *did* come to marry me, for I had scarce a decent dress to my back, let alone money, and, to be sure, it wasn't for my beauty——"

All the youngsters laughed out at this, for Mrs. Fogarty was—"blessed be the Maker!" as her neighbors used to say—"as homely a woman as you'd see in a congregation." Even her own daughter enjoyed the joke, the more so, as her mother was quite in earnest in her good-natured observation; and was, moreover, very much in the habit of repeating the same thing, whether from humility, or a secret consciousness that if she *had*

no sightliness to boast of she had other qualities more valuable if less attractive.

"Upon my word, Mrs. Fogarty!" began Henry Hackett with the puzzled look of one who was casting about in his own mind for something to say——

"Nonsense, man, don't mind her," said William H., cutting him short—"she's only fishing for a compliment. She wants some of us to say that 'beauty is but skin deep,' and 'doesn't make the pot boil brown!'—as you often say yourself, Ellen, honey, 'pretty is that pretty does,' and, judging by that rule, I've as pretty a wife as any going. Haven't I, Ellen? What are you laughing at, girls, there behind backs?"

"Look in the glass and you'll see!" said his wife a little maliciously—in her heart she was not so thoroughly convinced of her own deficiencies on the score of good looks, but that she could swallow a little compliment, if any one stretched politeness so far as to offer it—and she did not much relish her husband's over-ready admissions in regard to her appearance.

The hasty glance that William H. threw, in consequence, on the small mahogany-framed mirror opposite which he sat was more than sufficient to bring the hot blood to his somewhat sallow visage. Reflected on the dark surface of the glass was himself in the foreground, with his rather dandified wig set in such comical fashion on his head, that nearly one-half of the cranium was exposed, bearing a shorn

crop of silver-gray stubble that contrasted as oddly as could be with the dark luxuriance (as the novelists would say) of the other section of the sphere. The background of the picture was occupied by four saucy, grinning faces, of which his own daughter's was the most provokingly mischievous. Arranging the disordered *chevelure* with the greatest dispatch possible, Mr. Fogarty turned angrily to his daughter, whose look became suddenly quite demure:

"I say, Julia! was that your work?"

"My work! why, pa! how can you think so? La! you did it yourself when you reached your snuff-box that time to Mr. Hackett—you did, indeed, pa!"

"I tell you I didn't," said the father still more sharply. "I know you, my lady! you and your mother are always plotting mischief, and playing tricks on me——"

"My goodness gracious, Billy Fogarty!" cried his wife bristling up, "you needn't be making such a time about your wig getting crooked on you!—what if Julia *did* give it a shove—sure everybody knows that dandy black brush-top isn't your own. Upon my credit!" she added in a sort of parenthesis, "it's my opinion he hadn't a black hair on his poll these ten years. Why, man! you needn't look so black—depend upon it, you'll not be coming here, or anywhere else, for a second wife, if *I* can help it!—ha! ha! ha!"

The good woman's laugh was left to herself, for

William H.'s vexation was too real and too evident for the others to keep up the joke.

"How much did that house of yours cost, Mr. Fogarty?" said Hackett abruptly, with a view to change the current of his ideas.

"I'd be almost ashamed to tell you, Henry," the baker replied with a sullen glance at his wife, who was still chuckling over his mishap. "It was these confounded women that got me into it—nothing would serve them, but they must have a fashionable house near the avenue, and I had neither peace nor rest till I bought the lot and went to work. The house that would suit me didn't suit them, and they kept at me ding-dong, and at the architect, too, till the house grew to a size that I never intended, and, with all the jig-a-ma-rees they got on it, cost me the most of what ready money I had in bank. I don't believe I'll have enough to finish it without going in debt. And then there's the furniture to come after—for, of course," he added jeeringly, "the furniture we had in our snug *old* house wouldn't answer at all for our grand *new* one."

"Well! father, how you talk!" said Julia, reddening to the eyes. Her mother took up her bonnet with a scornful glance at her husband, and a muttered exclamation about some people *having the buttermilk in them*—the which in the peculiar phraseology of her class in Ireland means anything but a compliment.

Henry Hackett hastened to repair the nuptial breach, as he well knew how :

“Do you know, Mr. Fogarty!” said he, very gravely, “I think the mistress and Miss Julia were in the right—what for wouldn’t *you* have *at least* as good a house as Tom Gallagher? Everybody knows who has the deepest purse, and the best credit in the bank, for all Tom *does* boast now and then when the glass is in, that he’s a richer man than you are—though, as I said, every one knows how that matter stands, still it’s well for you to shut his mouth, and that’s what you have done in regard to putting up such a house, you may say next door to his.”

A groan from one or all of the Miss Hacketts was here plainly audible.

“You really think mine is the handsomest—eh, Harry?” This was said in a tone of such tremulous anxiety that it was evident the speaker’s whole heart was in the question.

“Do I think it? I *don’t* think it, but I’m *sure* of it! Hasn’t yours them stone railings, whatever they call them, on *two* stories, and Tom’s only on *one*, and aren’t you a full story higher, not to speak of other things in proportion? I believe there isn’t a house in the block like yours, putting one thing with another.”

“There now! didn’t I tell you so?” cried the wife triumphantly. “You’ll not deny but Mr. Hackett is a good judge, and a wise man to boot,

and you hear what *he* says. Of course what *we* say goes for nothing!"

"Never mind, Ellen dear!" said the mollified husband with more than restored good humor, "Ill let you and Julia choose the furniture yourselves."

"And go in debt for it, pa?" asked Julia with a meaning glance at her young companions, on whose minds she wished to impress the fact that her father was not in earnest when he spoke of his funds being exhausted.

"Debt or no debt," was the answer, "the house must be furnished in good style. We can't have one thing making a fool of another, and we may as well be hanged for an old sheep as a young lamb. *We'll let Gallagher see who's the richest.*"

"You must come and see us often when we get into the new house," said Mrs. Fogarty at the door, with quite an air of condescension.

"Now do!" repeated Julia coaxingly, "we shall be so glad to see you."

The Hackett girls promised, but the moment the door was closed the three girls laughed out in chorus. "Come and see us often!" said Sarah Eugenia in Mrs. Fogarty's very tone. "What a notion we have of it! They just want to show off their elegant house and furniture and all that, as if we were so green as not to know what they're up to!"

"That's so like Julia!—a'nt it?" subjoined

Mary Clementina, with a prodigious yawn. "But really I'm so tired I can't keep my eyes open."

"Pa" and Michael had already betaken them to their sleeping apartment, and the girls were not slow to follow.



CHAPTER II.

BEING A CHAPTER ON THE WHOLE ART OF SHOPPING, OR
SHOPPING MADE EASY.

To do the Gallaghers justice their household was conducted on more rational principles than either Fogarty's or Hackett's. The mother was a sharp, shrewd, active little woman, with a fair endowment of that valuable quality called "common sense." She was not, to be sure, overstocked with book-learning any more than her husband, who, having commenced life as a butcher's boy, was, it may well be believed, a little behind on the score of education. Tom was a good-natured, fat, heavy-featured man, remarkably dull in comprehension, so much so, indeed, that it was matter of astonishment to all his acquaintances how he ever got to the sunny side of this dark world—in fact, it could only be accounted for by the visual darkness of the goddess who turns the wheel of man's destiny. Tom was ignorant—there is no denying that—illiterate, indeed, he might be called, but Tom knew that himself, and although ignorance was certainly *not* bliss in his case, yet he never attempted to pass himself off for what he was not, and, for that very reason, people spoke kindly, never harshly or contemptuously of his deficiency. His wife was a very different

person. More fortunate than he, she had "a little smattering of education," just enough to enable her to read her prayer-book and write her own name—an accomplishment which, in her own case, was altogether superfluous, as the girls did all the writing of the family. It was easy done, for that matter, as, apart from Tom's business, the accounts of which were kept by a certain Atty Fitzgerald—commonly called Garrell—the private correspondence of the house of Gallagher consisted in a letter at Christmas, and another at Easter, to an old aunt of Tom's in the county Clare, his sole surviving relative. These letters, to Tom's credit be it said, were something more than mere sheets of paper covered with neat, fair characters; they were meant for the Christmas-box and the Easter-gift, and were sent accordingly lined with a draft for some five pounds sterling on the bank of Ireland, payable in Ennis. Mrs. Gallagher's relatives were all in America, scattered here and there, and it so happened that none of them stood in need of assistance, though none had been so fortunate as herself in securing a fair share of this world's wealth. She had two sisters married to farmers out West, one in Wisconsin, the other in Illinois, and her only brother was a settler

" Deep in Canadian woods,"

where the Ottawa rolls down his silver tide to swell the great St. Lawrence. His home was a pleasant

farm-house in the fertile Ottawa Valley, and his daughters and his sons were growing up around him strong, fresh and healthy, in the invigorating pursuits of agricultural industry—far away from the contaminating influence that abounds in cities. So good Mrs. Gallagher was in the habit of boasting that she hadn't a soul belonging to her that wasn't "getting along first-rate, and unbeholding to any one." Not that she meant this as a hint for Tom, for Tom's old aunt in Clare had no more generous friend in the family than its bustling mistress—no, no, it was merely a good-natured, harmless boast, and as such Tom always took it and answered in the best possible good faith: "That's no lie, anyhow—they're a well-doing set of people, and have a mighty great push in them." And so they were, and Mrs. Gallagher was as "well-doing" as any of her kin. She had helped Tom well in the accumulation of their little fortune, and now that it was made she had no desire to spend it foolishly, as she said herself; she was just as willing to work then as she was years before when they were laying the foundations of their prosperity. Though a great lover of cleanliness and neatness, she kept but one servant, even after their removal to the new house, giving it as her opinion that it would be a burning shame for seven women of them if they couldn't keep the house in proper order with one girl to do what outdoor work there was, together with the washing and scrubbing. Her daughters grumbled no little

when they first came home from school to find themselves under the hard necessity of taking each a share of the household work ; it was something that had never entered their calculations, and they felt mortified and indignant at being subjected to menial avocations after coming home from school. Of course, their "schooling-days" were not all begun or ended together. They were at school three by three.

"If we thought this was to be the way of it," said Eliza, the eldest, taking upon her to speak for the others, after she and her two next younger sisters had left school, "I'm sure we needn't have been in such a hurry to get home. Better be studying and practising in school than working like niggers here at home." And the tears gushed from Eliza's large round eyes.

"Eliza dear !" said her mother, "I'm sorry for your trouble, as the word says, but just tell me one thing. What did you mean to do with yourself when you'd get home?"

"Mean to do !" said Fanny, the second sister, "why what *would* we mean to do? What do all the young ladies do that come from school?"

"That's just what I'd like to know myself," said the mother quickly, but still very composedly.

"Why, dear me, ma ! I never thought you was so stupid !" cried Eliza petulantly ; "don't everybody know that young ladies who have got a good education can't be toiling and drudging about the

house—if they did their hands wouldn't be fit to be seen, nor their clothes neither!"

"But what *are* they to do?" persisted the mother who was busy polishing her parlor furniture. "Is their good education to keep them from using their hands?"

"Why—why—," said the girl, her eye falling beneath her mother's searching and half-quizzical glance, "they can play the piano——"

"Well?"

"And sing sometimes——"

"Very good, and what more?"

"Why my!" cried Ellie, the third daughter, in a very saucy tone, "what's the use of such catechising as that? Can't you tell her, Eliza, that they have got to do everything at home that they learned at school?"

"Oh! I see," said the mother, looking from one to the other with a half smile on her thin face, "I see!—so because you hadn't a chance to polish furniture, or dust, or sweep, or cook, when you were at school, you are never to do any such things in your whole life? Now who's to do all this *for* you?"

"Why, servants to be sure!"

"Ay, if you happen to have them? But if you haven't, if your father is not able or not willing to keep them, who's to do the work then for this large family of ours?"

"Why, ma! surely we can afford to keep enough

of help to do *all* the work? What's the use of people being rich if they have to break their hearts working as you do all the time?"

"*I'm* not breaking my heart working, and I don't think work breaks any one's heart. But it's a folly to talk, girls! so I'll just tell you the short and the long of it. Your father, maybe, isn't just as rich as you take him to be, and, at any rate, he'll not hear of keepin' more than one girl, so you see you've got to work, whether you like it or no. And there's another thing to be said about it—I guess you'll all want to go out no worse than your neighbors in regard to dress?"

"Why, of course, ma! we must look decent, or we can't go out at all."

This simultaneous answer elicited an approving nod from the mother. "Well! then, girls, if you want to dress well, you must work well—do you understand me now?"

"Yes, ma!" This response came forth in a tone very different from the other. The two monosyllables dragged each a heavy chain.

"Well! it's a bargain, is it?"

"Y—e—s, m—a!" letter by letter.

"Up with you, then, and begin at once!—get *you* to work, Eliza, to wash these windows, and let Fanny do the closet in the next room."

"And what shall *I* do, ma?" inquired Ellie, very demurely, glancing at her sisters, "I guess *I'm* to wash the dishes."

"Or take the part of Cinderella," suggested Eliza, "you're the youngest, you know, so you'll be ash-wench."

"None of your humbugging now," said the mother, "I know what you're up to with your Cinderellas—you'd all like to be *princesses*, and sit in state till some prince or another came along to pick you up, but as there's no fairy godmothers now-a-days it's the hard-working fathers and mothers that must pay the piper. Now I tell you again, my good ladies, if you want to wear silks and satins you must give a hand with the work."

"My goodness, ma!" said Ellie, pouting, "I only asked was I to wash the dishes—I'm sure *that* was no harm."

"I didn't ask you to wash the dishes," said her mother angrily, "you *know* I didn't, but there's a sight of stockings to be darned, and clothes to be mended, and I want you to do some of *that*."

Eliza groaned and turned up her eyes; her sisters tittered and made wry faces at each other behind their mother's back, but they went to their several tasks notwithstanding, and from that day forward a part of each day was allotted to work, and it soon became so easy and natural to the girls to assist in managing the affairs of the house that what seemed at first an intolerable burden was at last a source of pleasure. When the other three sisters came home from school, they had just the same horror of household work, and the same ground had to be gone

over with them. The process was somewhat easier, however, in their case, having the example of their elder sisters before their eyes, and finding from *their* detailed experience that there was no other way of "coming round pa, or ma either, so as to get what they wanted."

"It a'nt any use trying to get out of it," said Eliza, with quite an oracular air, during a sisterly conclave held a day or two after Mag and Annie and Janie came home "for good"—"we tried everything, when *we* came home, but nothing would do; pa and ma would have us work, whether we liked it or not, and, I tell you, we did *not* like it, at first, but we got used to it after a while, and now we'd all as soon do it as not—it a'nt any trouble to us now."

"But, la me, only fancy *us* doing servants' work!" and Annie, half-crying, held out her little, soft plump hands, and looked at them with a most rueful expression of countenance.

"Never mind, Annie!" said the elder sister, now becoming rather womanly, "never mind, we'll give you new-comers the lightest part of the work. You can choose for yourselves."

"Well! I know what *I'll* do," said Janie, in a shrill treble voice, shaking her head knowingly at the same time, "*I'll feed Tabby and wash Gumbo.*"

Tabby was the venerable mouse-catcher, and Gumbo the canine pet of the household—a fat, squat little poodle.

The chorus of laughter that greeted Janie's

"choice" by no means disconcerted the little maiden, who was tolerably self-possessed for a damsel of fifteen. When her father was told that evening of the work which Janie had allotted to herself, he laughed immoderately, and swore the child should have her way. "Don't let me see you grind *her* down with work, old woman!" he said to his wife, "or—or—you and I'll quarrel; she's but a child yet, and there's enough of you without her; so just let her practise her music and amuse herself a little—you'll get her in the traces soon enough, *I'll go bail!*"

"I declare to the Lord, Tom Gallagher!" cried his wife, bristling up, "you'd spoil all the children in New York City! A fine house we'd have of it if *you* had your way."

"Why, honest woman! don't be in a passion! you know well enough I never bother my head about your affairs; you and the girls have it all among yourselves; I know you're a first-rate driver, but I don't want little Janie to be driven for another while; just let her alone, and do as you like with the rest."

"Oh! certainly, Tom, cer-tain-ly!" said the keen-witted matron with ironical emphasis, "I give you my word I'll not ask Janie to do a hand's turn—we'll *not* spoil her growth, depend on it. *It's easy seen she's a Gallagher.*"

And so saying, Mrs. Gallagher flounced out of the room with a look of ineffable contempt at her good-

natured partner, who was in the habit of boasting that his youngest daughter—who was also the prettiest—was the dead image of a favorite sister of his that died when he was a boy.

Tom was, as we have said, a good-natured man, and if he didn't believe his wife always in the right he did believe that she was seldom in the wrong. Though his trade was blood, there was nothing quarrelsome in his disposition, and he would make any personal sacrifice at any time to uphold the great principle of the hymn-book that

“ Whatever brawls disturb the street
There should be peace at home.”

Tom knew nothing of Dr. Watts or his Divine Songs, but that was his maxim, notwithstanding. He was sorely perturbed, therefore, in spirit, at the storm-cloud that had arisen on the domestic horizon, and he hastily dispatched Eliza after her mother to tell her that he “didn't mean anything,” and she “mustn't be vexed at him.”

“And run you, too, Janie dear!” said the honest butcher, “and tell your mother you're willing to do whatever she bids you do. That's my girl—run, now, and you'll see what a nice silk dress I'll buy you to-morrow!”

Janie's sulky face brightened in an instant, and away she tripped after her elder sister, in a glow of ecstatic delight, her mind full of the promised silk dress. It is needless to say that the embassy was in all respects successful, for Janie volunteered her

services for anything and everything, and the mother was so highly pleased by the ready admission of her supreme authority that she not only ratified Tom's promise in regard to Janie, but extended it to all the others. To be sure the reconciliation, on these terms, was rather an expensive one, but what went for dress was well laid out, according to the established theory of the house of Gallagher, and so long as "pa was willing to shell out" there were no qualms of conscience—or of prudence.

Mrs. Gallagher and her two eldest daughters sallied forth on the following afternoon on the great and all-important business of shopping. Pleasurable though the prospect was, there was a cloud on the brows of "a' the three" when they stepped down stairs ready for town. The fact was that the whole seven faces, of Mrs. Gallagher, namely, and the six Misses Gallagher, were *all* more or less under a cloud at that particular moment. The four junior ladies were grievously troubled in mind that they couldn't all be of the shopping party, against which the mother set her face *in toto*. Each one wanted to "choose her own," as we used to say or sing in our childish days when marching round hand-in-hand with our young companions marrying off the heiress of a certain

"—— poor widow that lived in Athlone,"
which bereaved individual

"—— had ne'er a daughter to marry but one!"

This fair damsel of Athlone was earnestly and re-

peatedly admonished (in the play) to "choose her own," and the Miss Gallaghers, without any such solemn injunction, did think themselves entitled to "choose their own" new silk dresses. The house was pretty equally divided on the question, but as the minority included the maternal parent—who was a sort of autocrat in her way—the majority was forced to yield to the stern law of necessity. Well! that accounted for four of the lowering brows, but what had gone wrong with the other three that they, too, should exhibit unmistakeable signs of discontent? Their conversation, as they walked to the neighboring avenue to take the cars, will enlighten the reader on that point.

"I've a great mind not to go at all," said Mrs. Gallagher who was dressed in a rich brocade silk, flounced half-way up the skirt, a deep circular cape of the finest black velvet, and an exceedingly small bonnet of crimson velvet, ornamented with two white ostrich plumes so long that they tipped her little narrow shoulders on either side at every step she took. "I've a great-mind-not-to-go-at-all," said she again with increasing determination. "How does he think I can buy six dresses—not to speak of a shawl I wanted for myself—out of a *hundred and fifty dollars*?"

"A hundred and fifty dollars, ma! why, I thought he gave you two hundred, and even that would be hardly enough. Why, that shawl you were looking at in Stuart's is fifty-five dollars, you know!"

"Yes, but I could do with the other he showed us at forty, though, to be sure, I set my heart on havin' one like Mrs. Dan Brogan's. But, then, you see, even at that, I wouldn't have enough left to get the six dresses. Do you think I would, Eliza?"

"Not if you got that pearl *moire antique* for Fanny and me—they'd be eighty dollars, you know."

"I'll do no such thing, then," the mother replied sharply, "less must do you this time. It's every one of you for herself. Eighty dollars, indeed! why, that would be the half of the whole, wouldn't it? and how would I manage for the other four, if I got any kind of a shawl worth carryin' home."

"Well, ma!" pleaded Eliza, between whom and her sister divers admonitory gestures were exchanged, "you know it's for Lil Smith's party we want them, and Dora Brady and Lucina Dugan and Jo Fitzsimmons have all got *moire antiques*."

"*Mare a'teek*, your granny!" The cars had just stopped to take in our fair trio, so the debate was adjourned to Stuart's, the Collosseum of fashion.

Seated in a row at the counter, Mrs. Gallagher and her daughters resumed the discussion of the *mare a'teek* question, with the great collateral issue of spinning two dresses of that costly fabric, four silks of approved "style" and a shawl like Mrs. Dan Brogan's out of the fifteen ten-dollar bills wherewith Tom Gallagher's niggardly generosity had furnished his wife's *porte-monnaie*.

Many a sly glance of humorous intelligence passed

amongst the finical young gentlemen behind the counter as they came and went in their arduous avocation of "waiting on" the Gallagher ladies and all the other ladies who at that particular hour were paying their costly tribute to the fantastic divinity, Fashion. It is probable that the tedious deliberations of our three ladies would soon have exhausted the patience of the young gentlemen aforesaid, had not Mrs. Gallagher and her daughters been well known in Stuart's as "fowl worth a plucking"—good for ready money.

The council of three, after exercising the young gentlemen's professional patience for the space of an hour, at length brought its sitting to a happy conclusion. A parcel was made up containing two *moire antiques*, marked on the bill *seventy-five dollars*, two brocades, *fifty*, two plain checked silks, *twenty-five*, seven pairs Alexander's best kids, *seven dollars*, and one Paisley shawl, *fifty dollars*—"Total—TWO HUNDRED AND SEVEN DOLLARS," as the obsequious young gentleman who had the privilege of summing up the figures, announced in the blandest manner possible.

"I'm afeard I haven't got enough to pay you all," said Mrs. Gallagher, taking out her porte-monnaie.

"It don't make the slightest difference, ma'am," said the extra-civil shopman, as he handed the fifteen ten-dollar bills to the juvenile official whom his spasmodic cry of "CASH!" had summoned from parts unknown. "The balance can lie over till you

come again—or—whenever it suits your convenience, ma'am!"

"I'm entirely obleeged to you," answered Mrs. Tom, with an air of grateful deference. "It'll not be long if I can help it."

"Don't hurry yourself, ma'am!—ahem!" with a comical glance from the corner of his eye at his next neighbor behind the counter. "We'll be always happy to see you, Mrs. Gallagher! but pray don't trouble yourself coming on account of the little balance—it is *only* fifty-seven dollars"

"Fifty-seven dollars!" repeated the maternal Gallagher to her daughters, as they emerged from Stuart's by one of the Chambers street doors. "Lord save us, girls! we'll be killed dead—your father 'ill have our lives!"

"Nonsense, ma! we can manage him easy enough—even if he *does* get in a passion about it, it will blow over, you know! and then we can make believe that *we're* very angry, and pa'll be glad enough to make peace with the fifty-seven dollars—perhaps more. But then our *moire antiques*! I do feel so bad that we couldn't get the shade we wanted. There's what comes of being niggardly—if pa had only given us the money a week *ago* we'd have had our choice, now Dora and Lucina and Jo have got the pick of the whole lot. Why Liz Adams, that only paid thirty-two dollars for hers, has a better shade than ours. I declare it is too bad—a'nt it, Fanny?"

"I wish to the Lord yourselves and your *mare a'teeks* were in—Alabama!" cried the harassed mother. "You weren't easy till you got them, and now when you have them, they don't please you! there I went like a fool and bought them for you, and you choosed them yourselves, too, still you're not satisfied! botheration to them for *mare a'teeks*—there couldn't be luck with them and they havin' such an outlandish name!"

"Well, ma! you know yourself they're nasty, faded looking things, and I'm sure they'll look worse still when they're alongside of Dora's and Jo's and Lucina's. If they'd only look decent by gas-light I wouldn't care so much!"

"They'll look better than you think," said Fanny, "and, at any rate, I don't care to have the very same shade as the others, because, then, you know, they'd be saying we were copying after them. It's just as well to have ours a little different."

This was real consolation, and by the time the Sixth avenue stage (for which they had been waiting at the corner) came along, Eliza had made up her mind that it would not have been so desirable, after all, to have the very exact shade of Mesdemoiselles Dora Brady & Company's *moire antiques*.

When the new purchases were exhibited at home the junior Miss Gallaghers were not over well satisfied, either, with their share of "the shopping." Some of the dresses were allowed to be "passable," but others, and of the last number was Janie's, were

pronounced "horrible things," and "as old as the hills."

"Why, ma!" said Janie pursing up

"Her wee bit mou' sae sweet and bonnie."

"Why, ma! what ever put it in your head to buy that blue checked silk for me, and to go to Lil Smith's party, too?"

"And what fault do you find with it, miss?"

"Why, goodness gracious me! couldn't Eliza have told you that Amy Moore had one just the very same!"

"Why didn't you tell me that, Eliza?" asked the mother very gravely; "the child is right enough; if Amy Moore has one like it, it would never do for Janie Gallagher. Them Moores are so upsetting and carry their heads so high since the old fellow got into the corporation, that you'd think the whole city belonged to them. Why, I met my lady herself in the market the other day, and only think, if she hadn't the assurance to turn up her nose as she passed me, as if I was dirt in her eyes. She doesn't mind how often I obliged her, when I used to give her credit a couple of dollars at a time, until Larry would fall into work again. Many a time they'd have wanted their dinner if it wasn't for my four bones!—but now, to be sure, Larry's in the corporation, and Madam Peggy must begin to put on airs! I wouldn't mind it, though, if she wouldn't be trying to cope up with us and the likes of us, that could buy Larry Moore from the gallows till within

the last couple of years—and *God knows where the money came from!*" she added, with a mysterious air, that deeply impressed her attentive hearers, who, of course, shared their mother's enmity towards the audacious Moores—who were notoriously guilty of getting up suddenly in the world, and, what was far more heinous, attempting not only to imitate the ladies of the house of Gallagher, but actually to out do them in the world of fashion! There was impudence for you! Larry Moore, that kept a little shanty of a liquor-store away in some back street, until luck—or *something else*—threw a penny of money in his hands and shoved him into the corporation—to think of *his* folk comparing themselves to *them* (the Gallaghers) and *their* father having one of the first stalls in Centre Market, and one of the oldest, too! No, the blue checked silk must be returned to Stuart's—that was unanimously agreed upon—and Eliza and Fanny were severely reprimanded by their mother for not having thought of it in time, *i. e.*, during the counter session—that that red-haired fright Amy Moore had one like it. Serious fears were entertained that "Stuart's people" wouldn't be so obliging as to change the unlucky blue check for another, but these fears did "Stuart's" a great injustice, for the dress was happily and satisfactorily changed for one that was declared "a perfect beauty," which "beauty" came with the further recommendation that one of the first young ladies in town had got one like it the day before.

This point settled, the next thing was to send for Miss Waldron, the family dressmaker, who was esteemed one of the best in New York, and was honored, accordingly, with a most extensive patronage. She had few equals and no superior in the art of "fitting."

"And even the story ran——"

that she had "fitted" the President's lady—an achievement worthy of her high reputation, seeing that the same exalted individual was not particularly remarkable for symmetry of shape, whatever other perfections she might have brought to the White House. It may well be believed that Miss Waldron, endowed with all this wealth of fame, rated her professional services pretty highly, and made her customers pay well for the honor of being "fitted" by so eminent an *artiste*. There is no denying that such was the fact; Miss Waldron *did* charge high, she professed to charge high, and Miss Waldron thought it was the interest of her employers as well as her own that she *should* charge high, because it kept low people from aspiring to the honor of being "fitted" in a style that *ought* to be reserved for their betters. In fact Miss Waldron was a sort of Barnum in her own "line of business," and knew as well as that potent humbug himself how to get up a name. Notwithstanding her aristocratic pretensions, the Gallagher family had been on her list a number of years, which fact she accounted for to others by a patronizing admission that "she had

been working for Mrs. Gallagher before she got right into the business, and she really didn't like to hurt the poor woman's feelings by leaving off—of course, the Gallaghers weren't *just the thing*, she knew that—but, then, she couldn't well get over doing their work now though she had more than she could do from the first in town." To the Gallaghers themselves Miss Waldron spoke in a different key, and declared—probably, in all sincerity, that she had no better customers than they.

This stately lady—for stately she was—brought joy and happiness to the troubled minds of Mrs. Gallagher and her daughters six by the gratifying announcement that the *moire antiques* were "the very thing"—upon her word, Miss Waldron said, the Misses Gallagher were very lucky to *get* that particular shade, for, to her knowledge, Mrs. Livingston Brandreth had been all over town in her carriage looking for that very identical shade. "How it escaped *her* eyes in Stuart's I really don't know, but all I can say is, you were very, *very* lucky—I mean fortunate." Miss Waldron prided herself on using choice language, befitting her close connection and frequent intercourse with the great.

Questioned regarding the junior dresses, Miss Waldron said they were "very nice, indeed"—when she came to Janie's, she made that young lady's heart beat the tattoo on her ribs by the exclamation:

"Dear me, Miss Janie! this is just the same as

one I made last week for Miss Von Wiegel, and she always has such nice things."

"Miss Von Wiegel!" cried at least four of the seven voices appertaining to the Gallaghers, "why that must be the grand lady that the clerk told us he sold one like it to." "You're sure it wasn't the *moire antique*?" superadded Eliza.

"*Moire antique*! no, indeed, it wasn't, Miss Von Wiegel never wears any such thing."

"How can that be, if she's one of the first ladies in town?"

"Now I've put my foot in it," said Miss Waldron to herself, "and if I can't get decently out of it, the fat's all in the fire." Luckily for the *modiste* she was tolerably ready witted, so she quickly recovered herself, and made an additional point at the same time.

"Oh! you see, she and the old Madam are all alone now—alone in the world, as one may say—and for all they're so rich and so grand, they've had trouble enough, I assure you—I mean to say they have had their share of this world's trials, and are not long out of mourning for the old Ritter—indeed, the Madam has *not* laid aside her mourning garb," said Miss Waldron solemnly and poetically, "and never will, but Miss Bertha—I mean Miss Von Wiegel—has just commenced wearing colors again. They see very little company at any time—the company here don't suit them—and I believe it is not their intention to see any at all now. So, of course,

Miss Ber——, I mean Miss Von Wiegel, has no need of *moire antique* !”

“ But the Ritter, who was he ?”

“ Why, the old Madam’s husband, of course. *Ritter* is a sort of title, you know, in the country they came from—somewhere in Europe.”

“ And Bertha ! what a lovely name ! And are they very, *very* rich ?”

“ Yes, very, *very* rich !”

“ And yet your Miss Von——Von——what’s her name, never wears *moire antique*—why, my goodness ! if I was her, I’d wear *moire antique* all the time.”

“ Well, tastes differ, you see,” said Miss Waldron with a scarcely perceptible smile. “ When will you want these dresses, young ladies ?”

This made a diversion, as Miss Waldron meant it should, and the Von Wiegels were forgotten in the nearer and dearer affair of “ the fitting.”



CHAPTER III.

FINANCIAL DIPLOMACY AND A FRENCH LESSON.

BEFORE we leave the Gallaghers for the present the reader may be curious to know how the little balance at Stuart's was arranged between Tom and his "womankind," as worthy Mr. Oldbuck was wont to say. In most other households of the same standing, with any other head than Tom Gallagher, the affair would have resulted in a general *embroglio*, and the younger daughters, as it was, were frightened when they heard of such a balance still remaining. To their school-girl ideas an hundred and fifty dollars was an immense sum of money to have the spending of. The mother and the elder daughters took the matter so easy that it quite mystified the juniors, who were literally trembling with apprehension as the hour approached when their father usually came home for the night. Mrs. Gallagher went bustling about as usual, but the "juveniles" remarked that a magnificent oyster-stew engaged her particular attention. Now this was Tom's favorite supper, and it happened very well that the careful wife should have it in readiness on that particular evening. Eliza, Fanny and Ellie were all quietly at work, the two former making up flannel underclothes, the latter knitting away as fast as her deli-

cate fingers could go at a woollen sock. Everything was in its place—even Gumbo and Tabby on the rug in front of the well-polished grate in which the brightest of coal fires was burning.

At last in came Tom, and the moment he entered the door his olfactory nerve was greeted by the grateful odor from the kitchen—it so happened that the doors leading from the lower regions were all open that evening.

“Ah ha!” said Tom rubbing his hands as he mounted the stairs—they were still in the old house—“I smell something good, and I’m just in the humor to relish it, for the evening’s raw, and I’m both cold and hungry.”

He drew a chair to the fire, and put up his feet on the fender whilst the oysters were being served. His three elder daughters were all so intent on their work that they barely spoke to him.

“Why, girls, you’re all very busy,” said the well-pleased father, as he spread his hands to catch the grateful warmth—“what are you at now?”

“Oh! that’s a secret, pa!” said Mag, who was arranging the supper on the table. The elder sisters only laughed and looked at each other as if imposing silence. “Never mind,” said Mag, who was the “rattle-pate” of the family, “I see you want to know what it means, so I’ll tell you.”

“If you dare!” said Eliza holding up her finger whilst the others chimed in with “Now don’t, Mag, don’t!”

"I will!" said Mag resolutely, "just because I know you don't want me to. They wanted to surprise you, pa, but now that you've caught them there a'nt any use hiding it longer. Ellie's knitting a pair of woollen socks for you, and she means to knit two or three pairs more, because ma says they're better and warmer than any we can get to buy."

"Oh! you wretch!"—"you shocking bad girl!"—"wait till we get a secret of yours!"

"Never mind them, Mag!" said Tom in increasing good humor. "What's the flannel for? Is it for me, too?"

"Oh no, pa!" said the too-candid Mag lowering her voice to a confidential whisper, "that's to send to Ireland by Mr. McMullen when he's going——"

"To Ireland, Mag? Ah! then, who to in Ireland?" asked Tom, and his heavy eyes began to sparkle with unusual lustre.

"*To dear old Aunt Biddy!*" whispered Mag in his ear. "You know she's got the 'rheumatics!'" This last was said loud enough for the others to hear as the adroit Mag was giving a quotation from old Biddy's letter, and the nature of the good dame's disease, as set forth by the schoolmaster, her neighbor—one Paddy Hanratty—had afforded much amusement to the accomplished young ladies her grandnieces. Mag's drollery had nearly spoiled all, for her sisters were "so tickled," as they afterwards declared, "to hear how nicely she humbug-

ged *the old man*, that when she came out at last with Aunt Biddy's 'rheumatics' they couldn't stand it any longer." So they had to run out of their father's hearing to give free vent to their merriment.

Poor Tom Gallagher! well as he knew how to make money he was little skilled in the art of chicanery; so he ate his oysters and the other good things provided in abundance for his entertainment, and praised Ellen and the girls for their industry, and still more cordially for their kind attention to his Aunt Biddy—which he thought more of than anything else they could do—and wound up by asking his wife *if she had got the dresses*.

"Oh, yes, we got them, and a shawl for me, and a good many other things we wanted. We hadn't money enough with us, but I knew it didn't make any matter—we can send it any time—and then it'll save us going out again for a while."

Tom's countenance fell a degree or so. "Well, and how much were you short? I say, how much do you owe?"

"Too much, Tom—too much for my liking," and Mrs. Gallagher shook her head with a most portentous air.

"Out with it, whatever it is, and let us be done with it!"

"Well, it's fifty-seven dollars—no, I'm wrong, seventy-five!"

Tom responded by an ejaculatory "Whew—

w—w!" then repeated, with marked emphasis, "Seventy—five—dollars!"

The girls were about to interpose, naturally supposing that their mother's arithmetic was at fault. A glance of her eye undeceived them, so they listened in silent suspense to the matrimonial dialogue.

"Yes, Tom, seventy-five dollars!"

"And what did you do with the hundred-and-fifty I gave you?"

"Why, now, Tom Gallagher! you used to be a sensible man, but I declare—well, it's a folly to talk, men have little notion of what it takes to keep up a family, and dress them decently, in New York!"

"God help me!" ejaculated Tom, "*I* ought to know it by *this* time!"

"Well! didn't I tell you we got six dresses—*six* dresses, mind!—and a shawl—and seven pair o' gloves—*seven* pair, mind you!—and—and——"

Mrs. Gallagher's memory failed her, but the ready tear came to her aid, and, unused as she was to the melting mood, she was suddenly reduced to the necessity of putting her handkerchief to her eyes, whining out, at the same time :

"It's a hard, hard thing for a woman at my age, a woman that works herself, and makes others work, too, to be questioned about the laying out of a few dollars—just as if I was a foolish slip of a girl that didn't know the value of money! I told you—I *told you* we bought a good many things——." Taking

the handkerchief from her eyes, she glanced at the flannel destined for exportation to Ireland, but said nothing. Tom's heart was soft, very soft, and, somehow, he never could bear to see anybody cry; it was a weakness Tom had, so he couldn't help it; whether his wife was in the secret or not, it served her well on that occasion, for Tom was mightily moved himself, and said: "Hut, tut, woman! don't be making a fool of yourself! keep your tears for the widow's cap!" and pulling out a somewhat greasy pocket-book of black leather, he counted out seventy-five dollars and handed it to her, while the girls drew back to hold a pantomimic colloquy of joyful import amongst themselves.

"There it is, Ellen!" said the unsuspecting butcher, "it's far off the rent of New York, to be sure, and I know it's nothing but what you're entitled to, but still I'd rather I hadn't to give it to you now, for I'm goin' up to-morrow to the Bull's Head to buy some cattle, and I owe a thousand and ten dollars to that Palmer from Jersey that I promised to bring him to-morrow. Still, as you owe the money it must be paid, for I never want to have my name or yours in people's books, if I can help it. We must only do the best we can for to-morrow!" he said gloomily to himself as he turned and began to poke the fire with great energy and perseverance.

Of course Tom was overwhelmed with thanks, and the girls strained every nerve to make the evening pass pleasantly, which it did, Tom being one of those

happy individuals who always make the most of present enjoyment, and leave the coming time to take care of itself.

"Wasn't that well managed, eh?" said Mrs. Gallagher to her daughters when they found themselves minus the head of the house some time before bedtime.

"Couldn't be better, ma! couldn't be better! but how did you come to make it seventy-five instead of fifty-seven?"

"Why, you goose," politely said the astute parent, "don't you know we have got Miss Waldron to pay?"

"Sure enough we have—I forgot all about that!"

"Well! you see *I* didn't forget it—it takes *me*, after all, for if I haven't the larning, I've the *gumption!*"*

The girls cheerfully admitted the *gumption* as a known fact, the more readily as it placed the game in their own hands on that momentous occasion, and secured a brilliant turn-out for the family at Lil Smith's forthcoming party, which party was to eclipse all the parties of the season, and make Dora and Co. hide their diminished heads—under

"The goose-plumage of Folly——"

wittily sung by one who knew the world of Fashion well—in circles where the moving planets were the high and the noble—endowed with the mystic qualities, "birth and breeding"—about equally rare on this side the Atlantic!

* Anglicè—*Presence of mind.*

The father of the family was meanwhile consoling himself with the thought—if thought he really had—that the deficit in his cash for the morrow's transactions at the Bull's Head would be somehow made up through the all-potent agency of Atty Garrell.

"He'll wonder what I done with it, though," said he half aloud as he shook the ashes from his last pipe; "he knows I had it made up—them confounded women! what a time they came at me!—well! there a'nt any use fretting about it—there's no cure for spilled milk, as poor Aunt Biddy used to say. I must just only tell Atty that I had a little bill to pay—and so I had, the deuce take it!"

Poor Tom Gallagher! soft-hearted, kind Tom Gallagher! he could not keep the dollars in his pocket-book and see his family "put about" for the want of them—least of all when the payment of "a balance" was in question, for one of Tom's peculiarities was a nervous dislike of being "in people's books." So he would rather encounter Atty Garrell's asperity, and trust to his ingenuity than allow his name to stand in black and white on Stuart's books as a debtor. There was a solid stratum of honorable principle at the base of Tom's mind, waste and uncultivated as the upper surface was. Tom was an easy creditor himself, often too easy for Atty Garrell's liking or the interests of "the concern," but he never wanted to be a debtor, or claim himself that indulgence he was so ready to extend to others. "Fashion" was Tom's great misfortune,

but in his case the misfortune was in some degree counterbalanced by the industrious habits of the family. The balance, indeed, was far from equal, for whilst Industry saved the dollars in units, Fashion ran away with them in tens and hundreds.

The dresses and gloves, with certain other *et ceteras* in the shape of flowers, blondes and laces, being secured for Lil Smith's party, it became the next object of consideration amongst the Gallaghers feminine who all were to be at the party. A series of visits was set on foot for the purpose of obtaining this important information. The girls resolved themselves into three committees of two for the better prosecution of the needful inquiries, and otherwise to carry out the views of the general council. All the spare hours of three days were devoted to this interesting investigation—the inquiries, of course, being made, as per previous resolution, in the most cautious and indirect manner possible so as to avoid the appearance of undue curiosity. The result was rather favorable to the hopes and wishes of the anxious expectants. Of some thirty persons who were *positively* to be *there*. (*i. e.*, at Lil Smith's—not her father's or mother's) twenty-one were known to the Miss Gallaghers as *somebodys*, and although the possibility existed that the other nine might be *nobodys*, still the presence of so vast a majority of decided "fashionables" justified the Gallagher constellation in appearing on the Smith meridian in Tenth street, West.

"But that's true," said the mother of the six stars, bustling into the room where the girls were arranging the flowers for their hair, and other such finishing touches of their preparations, a day or two before the party, "that's true, girls! is Julia Fogarty going?"

"Oh! of course," cried Mag with emphasis, "*of course!*" and all the others laughed. It was clear that Julia Fogarty was no favorite with the family.

"Annie and I met her at Mrs. Robinson's yesterday afternoon," said Eliza, "herself and Harriet Stokes."

"Why, you weren't telling us!" interrupted Fanny. "What did she wear—the black silk with the plaid trimming, eh?"

"No, I'll bet it was the Maria Louisa blue!" put in Ellie.

"You're both out this time," laughed Eliza, "it was neither one nor the other."

"What was it, then?—do you think she's got a new one?"

"If she has she hadn't it on then; it was the old brown brocade done up in the new."

"The old brown brocade!" chorused seven voices with a corresponding burst of laughter. "The old brown brocade!—hold me or I'll faint!—my stars! that brown brocade must have been in wear since the year *one!*—well! did you ever? La me! but she's the queer Julia!—a'nt she, now?"

These were the exclamations of the daughters

while the mother laughed till her sides shook again at what she called their *smartness*.

As we have unluckily but little relish for fashionable society (so-called)! and have a misty sort of idea that it must be a dreadful bore (to borrow one of its own pet phrases) to spend many hours of a winter's evening—those precious hours that seem as though kind nature meant them for social intercourse and the calm delights of home—amid the whirl, and rush, and crush, and glitter of a fashionable party—call it assembly, *soirée*, reception, *levée*,* or what you will. In such scenes the refined and thoughtful mind is more oppressed with solitude than it would be in the awful silence of the deep woods, or on the bleak white shore where the murmuring sea-waves come and go in perpetual motion. There is life in the grand old woods, and to those whose "hearts are attuned to nature's harmonies" their silence is more eloquent than human tongue in its mightiest power. Yes, true it is

"The deep woods and dark wilds can a pleasure impart," and so, too, can the many-voiced ocean, and the rustling of the breeze and even the howling of the tempest, all these may be heard with profit as well as pleasure, but not so the senseless gabble, the hollow mirth, the artificial titter, and the thousand

* In American society the *levée* is no longer the official reception it still is in old Europe. Would-be fashionable ladies have their *levées* as well as the President.

and one "shams"—unreal mockeries—that make up a fashionable party where the vulgar rivalry of dress and the pitiful cravings of vanity and envy are the spirits that rule the hour; where men and women seem all bent on showing how little brains, or even true taste nature gave them. Choice, therefore, would never lead us to Lil Smith's party, and as we have reason to hope that many of our readers would be just as much out of place there, we shall not visit the rooms—an apartment, namely, of some thirty feet at most, on ordinary occasions divided by folding doors—now "whipped away," however, like those whose sudden disappearance in Squire Beamton's mansion so puzzled our old acquaintance "the renowned Paul Dogherty, professor of Dancing and all other kinds of *music*." How "Lil's" ingenuity contrived to cram some forty-five or fifty people into her ball-room, like old Kaspar in the ballad, we "never could make out," but that such feat was accomplished by that hospitable young lady we have the testimony of the six Miss Gallaghers, the three Miss Hacketts—for they were there, too—not to speak of Julia Fogarty and her three brothers. Such a weight of evidence must, we think, establish the fact to a mathematical certainty, though Michael Hackett, who for reasons known to "self and father" had not availed himself of the Smithsonian invitation, did take the liberty of insinuating that the numbers were manifestly exaggerated, which skepticism of Michael's drew down

upon him the full measure of his sisters' wrath. Michael, however, was in such matters an infidel by profession; yea, verily, in the creed of Fashion Michael had no faith; he was what the pious Mus-sulmans would call "an unbelieving dog," with as little reverence for the laws that govern the world of Fashion as though he were brought up amongst the hermits of Montserrat,* on the "holy mountain" of old Spain, where Folly never waved his cap and bells, or Fashion her potent wand. The Hackett sisters had very poor listeners in their father and brother when their theme was "anything in the dry-good or jewelry line," but they amply indemnified themselves for the paternal and fraternal indifference, by discussing their favorite topics amongst themselves. The general effect of Lil Smith's hospitable exertions may be gathered indirectly from their enlightened comments when at four o'clock (P.M.) next day they assembled in the front room, "more dead than alive," as they curtly expressed their used-up condition.

"So the party is all over now!" said Ann Wilhelmina with a yawn that stretched her mouth from ear to ear.

"Well! I'm sure I a'nt sorry," said Mary Clementina; "if ever I was so tired of anything in all

* Most of my readers have, I hope, read of the pious community of anchorets on the mountain of Montserrat in Spain. An account of it will be found amongst the *pilgrimages* at the end of Abbé Orsiui's Life of the Blessed Virgin.

my life!—it was a stupid affair, after all—wasn't it, now?"

"It would have been," answered Sarah Eugenia, "only for the fun of watching how things went on, and the airs some folks put on themselves. Why it was good fun to watch the Smiths themselves. They just know as much how to get up anything of the kind as—as—the old cobbler over the way. Did you see the old fellow himself how he carried on?"

"And the mother not much better. Ha! ha! ha! I can't but laugh when I think of her—she looked for all the world like a great fat pincushion stuffed into copper-colored satin."

"And then the queer old uncle and aunt and the two skinny daughters from some place up the North River—la! before *I'd* invite such curiosities to *my* party! Why Lil might hire them out to Barnum at so much a head—what on earth *brought* so many old fogies there? I'm sure I wouldn't be bothered going if I had known the mixtrum-gatherum of a company that was to be in it."

"Well! but the dresses, Sarah," inquired Ann, "how did you like *them*? who do you think looked the best?"

"Oh! as for that, it's hard to say," replied Sarah, looking thoughtfully down on the carpet, as though the matter required what Sir Patrick O'Plenipo calls "very nice con-sid-eration;" "Lucina Duckett looked sweet in her lavender *moire* with blonde

trimming—if it wasn't for her round shoulders I'd say she was the belle of the room. Dora Brady's pearl *moire*, with white lace skirt, was superb, to be sure, but the red hair and freckles spoiled all—that Kate Morrisson looked grand in the straw-color satin with point lace—I tell you she did, but she's *so* tall—for all the world like a grenadier in petticoats——”

This brought out a burst of laughter from all the sisters, and there was mockery, bitter mockery, in their mirth, for this Kate Morrisson was really a fine, dashing girl, dressed “in good style,” and had made quite a sensation at “the party.” But she *did* seem too well acquainted with the power of her own attractions for other belles to ring her praises.

“Didn't Lil look well?” said Mary, with some degree of hesitation.

“Her!” cried the elder sister; “why, child! she looked a perfect fright!—my stars! did you ever see such a thing—a black satin with bows of red ribbon all up the front, and shoulder-knots of the same color with long streamers, and another bow to match tacked on at the waist behind, by the way it was a sash tied there; and what matter about all that if the face and figure were good, or even passable! But Lil Smith—oh, my! I felt like laughing right out every time I looked at her. It's hard to say whether herself or the old dame looked the funniest!”

“Well! I'm sure if the father wasn't funnier still

in his old-fashioned frock coat that looked as if it was made for him before he fell into flesh, whatever time that was."

"And I'm sure the pants looked as if the good man had outgrown them every way!"

"And his fiery red vest!" cried another.

"And his fiery red face!" echoed a third, "and his little round frizzled head set right on between the shoulders without the least little mite of a neck. I thought I'd choke trying to keep in when I saw him dancing that horrible Irish jig!"

This sally provoked another fit of laughing, and the three young ladies gave full vent to the merriment which it had cost them so much to suppress in the ball-room.

"Well! but what about the Gallaghers?" asked the younger of the three graces, as she wiped away the tears which the broad caricature of poor Smith and his Irish jig had brought to her eyes. "Didn't they come out strong in their *moire antiques*?"

"They didn't *all* come out so strong," answered the senior Miss Hackett; "Tom would never stand *that*, you know. But Ellie and Mag looked just as well, *I* think, as the two eldest, though *they* had only brocade—but then it was really nice."

"But they're all so fat, them Gallaghers, they always look vulgar, no matter what they wear." And Ann Wilhelmina curled her lip in huge disdain, and her two sisters, as a matter of course, did likewise. Miss Julia Fogarty was next "brought out,

and, after critical examination, pronounced "passable —if it wasn't for her snub nose."

The refreshments and the supper were successively discussed in the same spirit, and if the Miss Hacketts were correct in their estimate "the grand affair was not so grand after all."

Some time during that day Mrs. and the Misses Gallagher in *their* turn empannelled themselves into a jury to try "Lil Smith's party" on the merits. Many of their opinions differed from those of the Hacketts as regarded individuals, though to say the truth, the *buts* were not wanting in *their* descriptions any more than the others. The Miss Hacketts, in particular, were very roughly handled, and declared the commonest-looking girls in the room. The supper, however, was by them declared "splendid," and, moreover, "fit for any party in New York." But even to that there was an exception. The pickled oysters weren't nice at all, and the tongues were too salt, and the boiled turkeys weren't boiled enough, and the roast turkeys were burnt brown. Moreover, the lemonade, it appeared, was rather tart, and the ice cream hadn't the right flavor, at least, if there were different flavorings the seven Gallaghers had all happened on "that nasty vanilla," and they'd rather have no flavoring, at all, than that. "Surely the Smiths might have had some pine-apple and some strawberry and some lemon, a little of each, then folks would have had a choice —it was real mean of them to have nothing but

vanilla!" Still there were some things "really nice," and the two pyramids of ice cream and maccaroons, one at each end of the table, looked "so elegant" with a splendid bouquet of hot-house flowers in the centre—"do you know what?" wound up Fanny in a most emphatic tone, "Lil paid five dollars for that bouquet!"

"Well! and what if she did?" said Eliza rather abruptly as it seemed, but Miss Gallagher knew what she was about. "Of course, it set out the table—indeed, it wouldn't have looked anything at all without it—and, then, when people do give parties they ought to spare no expense to have everything in good style."

"After all," said Mrs. Gallagher with a shake of the head that implied a shade of dissent, "after all, Eliza, money is money, as Atty Garrell says (Atty was quite an authority on matters financial), and five dollars is too much for a bokay of flowers—just for one night——"

"Why my goodness, ma! if it goes to *that*, wasn't everything on the table 'just for one night' as well as the *bouquet*?" laying an emphasis on the last word meant to give her mother a gentle hint for present and future application."

"Yes, but still, you know, there's reason in all things, and for my part, I'd sooner buy a decent dress with the five dollars than a bo-kay of flowers."

"*Bouquet*, ma!" said Eliza impatiently, seeing that *hints* would not do for her maternal progeni-

tor where French pronunciation was in question. "Can't you say *bou-quet* instead of bo-kay?"

"*Bo-kay!*" repeated Mrs. Gallagher again, enunciating each syllable with a painful degree of emphasis.

"You may as well let her alone!" said one of the others, as soon as she could speak for laughing.

"Well, but, ma!" persisted Eliza, "a'nt it just as easy to say *bouquet* as bo-kay?"

"And didn't I *say* bo-kay?"

Eliza made a gesture of impatience, whereat her sisters laughed the more. Their mother stood with a bowl of eggs she was beating in one hand, and the egg-beater in the other, looking round the circle in open-mouthed bewilderment. At last she spoke—

"Well, I declare, you're a fine set of girls!—laughing at me because I can't get my tongue round a word that my mother before me, or my father either, never heard or never said—no, nor their seven generations, I suppose, more than themselves? Fine times, indeed!" and the egg-beater went to work with greater velocity than ever.

"Eliza admonished her sisters by a look that the "old woman" must be pacified. I say not that she acted on that particular text of the "collective wisdom of ages" which says that *a soft word turneth away wrath*, but, however it was, she gave the girls the cue to exonerate themselves, which they hastened to do.

"Why, ma! it wasn't at you we were laughing—it was at Eliza, trying to teach *you* French!"

"French?"

"Yes, ma! you know *bouquet* is a French word."

"Do you tell me so?" said the mother with a look of newly-awakened interest. "Sure I might know it was something by common, for it seemed to stick on my tongue like. Well! see that now!—many a strange thing I've seen in my time, but I never thought to see myself talking French."

"Well! but *don't* try your hand—I mean your tongue—at it any more," said Eliza in a half-jest-whole-earnest sort of tone, "when you want to say *bouquet* again, be sure you say 'a bunch of flowers'—will you remember that?—you know it's one thing for *us* to put French names on things and another for *you* to imitate us without knowing what you're saying." Without giving her mother time to get offended at this pert speech Eliza went on very rapidly: "I hope when *we* give our party, ma! you'll let us have a *bouquet*?—won't you, now?"

"*Bo-kay* or no *bo-kay*," rejoined the mother, somewhat testily, "the ne'er a party you'll have till you get into the new house, whatever time that'll be."

The young ladies were about to protest against this harsh decree, but their father's knock at the door sent them all "about their business" for the time being.

CHAPTER IV.

RHEINFELDT HOUSE—TASTE BUT NOT FASHION.

FOLLOWING the course of my veracious narrative, I am well pleased to conduct my readers to an old-fashioned residence some two miles farther up town, but much nearer the East River. The house was on the line of the First avenue, but it fronted on one of the intersecting streets. The old mansion, for such it was, was not yet "crowded up" by those pretentious piles of building which are rapidly covering the surface of Manhattan Island above the business part of New York City. Happily for the lovers of antiquity and the votaries of true state, there are still to be found within the precincts of our overgrown city, not a few dwellings that remind us of the good old times when *New Amsterdam* was a staid and sober city, laying the foundations of the great wealth and prosperity since attained by *New York*. Here and there on the outskirts of the great city, and occasionally even within its thoroughfares, these ancient dwellings of the real "New York aristocracy" strike the passing eye, their antique gables and high-pitched roofs half seen through the overhanging branches of their own "tall ancestral trees," whose gracefully varied foliage forms a soft, and, as it were, protecting shade

around the mansion. And truly they are refreshing to look upon, those homes of departed generations, for, independent of the quiet loveliness of the shady nook, the quaint simplicity of the house and its surroundings, you feel that refined and cultivated taste presided over their erection, seconded by ample means. Then imagination has free scope, for you know that men and women, very different from those we see around us, dwelt of old in those apartments, of whose interior you catch glimpses through the narrow windows; that reverend age full often trod those shaded verandahs, and brave and noble lovers whispered vows to gently-nurtured maidens in the shade of those graceful lindens where the murmuring fountain plays. Poetry and old romance glide hand in hand through the quiet alleys of the terraced garden, and the sunbeams that play amid the branches and sleep in beauty on the velvet sward, are like spirits from the land of dreams. Old memories hang in clusters round every graceful feature of the scene, and although they be not your own memories, although they have no answering chord in *your* heart, you can feel pleasure in the thought that there *are*, and must be, hearts who understand their mute expression in inanimate objects—hearts who hold the key to their wealth of ancient lore, and can people the scene with forms and faces from their own domestic annals.

Such a house is that to which we are now conducting the reader. With its pointed gable

towards the river, and its antique front overlooking its own sloping lawn on — street, it forms a graceful picture of the old, aristocratic days of New York. It was evidently a mansion of some note in the old, old time, and you whisper it softly to yourself as you gaze on its double tier of covered verandahs extending round the gable facing the river, and partially screened from the public view by an ornamental lattice-work; its successive rows of old casement-windows; the balustrade of light, open tracery running along the base of the roof; the long flight of stone steps descending from the principal entrance to the undulating ground beneath, fenced on either side by a heavy balustrade of white marble; the classical urns of that costly stone surmounting pedestals of Doric simplicity on small artificial knolls on either side of the carriage-road that ends at the foot of the steps; the venerable trees that here and there dot the broken ground between the house and the gate opening on the road, and the rare and beautiful shrubs so tastefully interspersed over the smooth grassy surface of the lawn. You wish to know something of the favored owners of that beautiful dwelling, who, and what manner of people they are who dwell among the shadows of so venerable a mansion. They cannot be, you say, the *parvenus* of New York society, the cormorants who have grown fat and lusty on the pennies and shillings of the poor, and are so infatuated by their own purse-proud vanity that they forget the depths

from which they have arisen and would soar to the upper regions of society without manners or education, or even common sense to steady their upward flight or secure them a firm footing in that world of Fashion to whose highest places they aspire. Reader, you are right in your conjecture!—such were not the inmates of Rheinfeldt House—before which we have tarried perhaps “ower lang” for your patience. The cold clear moon of “brown October” was sleeping on the lawn and the marble urns with the late autumn flowers lingering on their tops; and the balustrades and the light pillars of the verandahs, and the fast-stripping branches of the old trees, were all clearly defined in the silver sheen of the night; and those mellow rays stole softly and silently through the latticed windows and rested, as it were in love on a scene within that would have fixed the eye and gladdened the heart of Peter Paul Rembrandt.

Full in the light of a bright coal fire, blazing in the grate of a low, old-fashioned fireplace, sat an aged lady, whose venerable features were bordered, not concealed, by a widow’s cap, beneath which her silver grey hair was smoothly parted on her high, pale forehead, but slightly furrowed by the wrinkles of age. The ample folds of her sable dress contrasted strikingly with the colorless hue of her wan features, yet there was that in the clear outline of the face, the dark, piercing eyes, the sharp, aquiline nose, and the firm compression of the thin, pallid

lips, that denoted uncommon energy of character. The face and the full, large figure, reclining in a deep arm-chair of massive proportions, formed a picture of reverend age, venerable but not decrepid, and gave the impression of a well-preserved ruin, stately even in decay. Kneeling beside the chair, on a low tabouret, with her head resting on the old lady's shoulder, and her face turned towards the window, was a younger lady, whose features, though cast in a different mould, had precisely the same expression as those of the aged matron, and left little doubt on the mind regarding the degree of relationship existing between the two. It was not a girlish face, though still youthful, nor were the large hazel eyes, upturned to the silvery planet that was floating through evening ether, the eyes of "a merry, laughing girl." There was deep thought, and, perhaps, deeper sadness, in their steadfast gaze; and there was firmness of purpose and strength of will in the curve of the delicately-formed Roman nose and in the lines already forming round the beautiful mouth, then slightly open, like that of a person in a gentle slumber, showing teeth of pearly whiteness—shaded by soft rolls of glossy brown hair, it was a face that imprinted itself on your memory, and made you feel that the mind and heart beneath were high and generous and noble. There was a record of strange, perhaps untold, emotions in the depth of those radiant orbs.

They were alone, the mother and daughter, and

the only light in the room was that from the grate with the streams of moonlight shining in through the two windows and chequered by the bars of the lozenge-shaped panes of the antique casement. The branches of the linden outside, with the few shrivelled leaves that still clung to them, formed a delicate and graceful tracery through the shadowy lattice-work that rested aslant on the floor on a "field argent." The remaining portion of the spacious apartment was enveloped in gloom made still deeper by contrast with the warm glow around the fireplace and the silvery light from the windows. Partially within the light stood a small octagonal table of dark polished oak, with heavy claw-shaped feet supporting the massive trunk or pedestal, and on it lay a large folio volume open, its outlines dimly visible. On the low broad mantel-piece, curiously and quaintly carved, stood a time-piece that might have been on duty there since the first fire gleamed from the capacious fireplace beneath, and over it hung a picture that seemed in the dim light a portrait. Curtains dark and heavy hung from festooned valances over the windows in the style of our grandfathers' days, but their folds were drawn back on either side to admit the softened radiance from without and give, at the same time, a view of the starry heavens, that magnificent canopy which from age to age

" Publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand."

The lights and shades in that home-picture were so beautifully blended yet so clearly defined, and the group we have described presented so fair an illustration of the Summer and the late Autumn of life, that one could have looked for hours into that room of lights and shadows, and fancied it a *chef d'œuvre* of one of the old Dutch masters. But a soft, clear voice broke the spell, and you almost started to hear it, for the two figures were motionless as before.

The bells of some far-off churches were ringing seven. "Mother!" said the dreamy voice, "do you not love to hear that chime?"

"That do I, Bertha!" the mother replied; "the sound of church-bells has ever been sweet to my ear, and now it is doubly sweet and doubly dear, for it seems like an echo from the past and calls the dead—*our* dead—back from their graves, so that I can almost look into their eyes. I can fancy it, too, my own knell, summoning me to join those gone before."

"So that is the tale, then, that the music of 'those Evening Bells' tells to you. To me, now, it is different," added Bertha with a grave smile, "and although they be not

"The bells of Shandon
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters of the River Lee,'

their tone is, to me, cheerful and hope-inspiring. It is joy to hear them in this light and at this hour, with my head on your shoulder, mother! Oh mother! I *am* happy!"

“Happy, Bertha?”

“Yes, I said happy—happy in your love, and the exquisite calm of our present life.”

“Then you relish it, Bertha?” asked the mother very gently, but very earnestly.

“Relish it!” repeated the young lady raising her head and fixing her eyes on her mother’s, “relish it! why should I not? If ever peace settles down in my heart—I mean—that is to say—where is peace so likely to be found as in the shadow of our household gods!”

There was a deep red spot on either cheek and a strange light in the thoughtful eyes that did not escape the mother’s searching glance. She shook her head and smiled sadly, then suddenly started a new subject, or tried to do so, but Bertha was not disposed to quit the bells, so long, at least, as their sound, by distance mellowed, fell upon her ear. She hummed softly, as if to herself:

“There was a time, there was a time, when I was young and
free,
And every day the village-chime brought happier hours to
me.”

“It seems to me, dearest mother,” said she letting her head fall again on her mother’s shoulder, “it seems to me that those sounds annihilate time and space and bring one’s past life before them. The moon and yon evening star that follows ever in her train—those evening chimes breaking at intervals on the silence of the hour—how many

scenes do they all together conjure up from the silent waste of memory. Like the humorous author of the Bells of Shandon,

“ ‘ I’ve heard bells chiming
Full many a clime in
Tolling sublime in cathedral shrine.’ ”

Like him, too,

“ ‘ I’ve heard bells tolling
Old ‘Adrian’s Mole’ in
Their thunder rolling from the Vatican,
And cymbals glorious
Swinging uproarious
In the gorgeous turrets of Notre Dame.’ ”

The genial flow of humor in these last lines seemed to awaken a glow of cheerfulness in Bertha’s heart, and she repeated with a gay laugh: “Only think, sweet mother! of

“ ‘ — cymbals glorious
Swinging uproarious
In the gorgeous turrets of Notre Dame.’ ”

Whether the elder lady entered into the spirit of poor Mahony’s humor or not, she was fain to appear as though she did, glad to encourage her daughter in a more enlivening train of thought. She smiled, therefore, and declared it “very droll, indeed!”

“Oh! it is more than droll, mother, it is rich! There is nothing in verse to equal it except its cousin-german on the father’s side:

“ ‘ The Groves of Blarney that are so charming
All by the purling of sweet silent brooks,’ ”

which groves boasted, amongst other embellishments,

“ — statues gracing
This noble place in—
All heathen gods
And nymphs so fair ;
Bold Neptune, Plutarch,
And Nicodemus,
All standing naked
In the open air.’ ”

“ Bless you, my dear Bertha ! ” said her mother tenderly, “ it does me good to hear you talk so cheerfully. It reminds me of years long past, when my heart was as yours is now, overflowing with the fresh fragrance of life’s early spring. Oh ! pleasant are the days of youth.”

“ When looked back upon through the softening haze of years,” added Bertha, again fixing her eyes on the fair orb of night. “ The clouds that at times obscured their lustre when they were yet with us, have passed away—even from our memory—the thorns that were wont to lacerate our feet are no more remembered—the sky of youth, viewed through the medium of vanished years, has no cloud ; the flowers we culled in youth had no thorns ! Of course not ! ” and she laughed with strange bitterness.

“ Why, Bertha ! ” said her mother looking anxiously into her eyes, “ why, Bertha ! you talk as if you, too, were old ! ”

“ And I *am* old, mother ! older than you think.

It seems to me I have lived a long, long time ! Indeed I scarce remember now *when* youth passed away—with its false visions, and its dear delusions, and all the rest of its charms."

- " *When* youth passed away ! why, my child, you are but in the summer of life—*your* sun is still high in the firmament, with no cloud to dim his lustre !"

" Ha !" muttered Bertha, as a dark body of vapor suddenly swept across the firmament, hiding the face of the silvery planet from her earnest gaze. " Ha ! so it is !—nature has her clouds, too !—mother, look there ! you see clouds are never far distant ! Even the glory we admired so late, ' the glory of moon and star,' is veiled as in a robe of mourning !"

" But it will come again, Bertha ! it will come again—see the cloud is already passing away. So will it be with the clouds of life——"

Bertha slowly raised herself from her knees and stood looking down on her mother with a half-abstracted, half-conscious gaze : " No, it is not so !" she said, or rather murmured to herself,

" ' For man in this world no spring-time e'er returns'—never truer word did poet speak !—there *is* no renewing for the lorn heart !"

The door-bell suddenly rang, and a man-servant opening the room-door, stood revealed in the glare of the gas from the hall without, a square, squat figure with a large round head, laid, as it were, on his broad shoulders.

" The young woman of the dress she ask to see

Madam or Miss !” said the man in a thick guttural voice.

“ Oh ! you mean Miss Waldron ?” said Bertha.

“ Yah !”

“ Show her in, Jan !”

“ Der Deyvil ! she will break her nose.”

“ True, Jan !” said Bertha, laughing ; “ be so good as to light the gas !”

From a portable match-safe, which he carried in his pocket, Jan drew forth a match, but the lighting of it was so tedious an operation that several minutes had elapsed before the yellow glare of the gas flashed on the heavy bronze candelabra and the equally heavy features of honest Jan. Then it took another minute or two to get the lights to a proper height.

“ You seem in no hurry, Jan,” said his young lady quietly ; “ I fear Miss Waldron will be tired waiting.”

“ Good for her !” said Jan with a nod, which he, doubtless, meant to be significant. He propelled himself towards the door, looking back over his shoulder and nodding again.

The mother and daughter exchanged meaning glances, and both smiled. “ Poor Jan !” said the old lady in an under tone, after he had disappeared ; “ poor Jan ! even *he* has suffered from the prevailing epidemic—if not in his person, at least in his pocket.”

“ Yea, verily, and in his peace of mind !” said

Bertha. "To my knowledge he has been a miserable man ever since——. Good evening, Miss Waldron! I am sorry you have been kept waiting."

Miss Waldron made two very low curtseys, having first placed a large bundle she brought on a *vis-a-vis* near her. Then she smiled a grave, sedate smile. "Oh! I know who to blame for that, Miss Von Wiegel!—you see Jan and I are not as good friends as we used to be, ever since——ever since——"

"Since his spouse Betty took to the fashions."

"That's just what I was going to say, miss! only I couldn't get my tongue right about it."

"Poor Betty!" said the young lady compassionately. "Have you brought the dresses, Miss Waldron?"

"Well, indeed, miss! I'm sorry—that is, I regret to say, I have only your mother's done—I was so busy——"

"What! excuses again!" said Bertha, with a smile which encouraged the dressmaker to go on.

"God bless you, miss!" broke involuntarily from her lips, "it's you that never said a hard word to me all the times I ever disappointed you!"

"And that was pretty often, you must admit! Well! I didn't want it very particularly at this time——"

"Sure I knew that, miss! I know you never want your dresses very badly, and besides, I always take a liberty with you and the old madam that I wouldn't take, or daren't take, with

fashionable ladies, such as are going now-a-days. God knows it's the hard earned money one makes trying to humor *them*, and make—and make——”

“Make what?” asked the younger lady, still smiling.

“Why, ‘a silk purse out of a sow’s ear’—begging your pardon, ladies.”

“Fie! fie! Miss Waldron,” said the old lady, though she could not help smiling, too—“you should not be so hard on the fashionable ladies who are, of course, your best customers. Were the ladies of New York all like my daughter and me——”

“I wish to God they were, madam!” exclaimed the dressmaker with honest warmth.

“My mother means in regard to dress, I believe!”

“I know what she means, miss! and it’s what *I* mean, too! dear only knows but I’m sick enough of the fashions, and the nonsense and extravagance I see wherever I go almost, and the airs people put on to hide their own ignorance—but then, you know, ladies! I couldn’t say that everywhere—a body must live come what may, and it wouldn’t do for a dress-maker——”

“A *modiste*!” suggested Bertha slily.

“You’re a great rogue, Miss Von Wiegel! that’s what you are!” said the dressmaker laughing—at least as near laughing as she could venture to do in *that* presence. “Will it please you, madam! to let me fit on your dress? I can go up stairs and wait till you come!”

"It is quite unnecessary, Waldron!" said the stately old lady condescendingly, "my daughter will try it on after we retire, and we can let you know how it fits when you come with *her* dress."

"Whenever that may be," added her daughter; but changing her tone she said with assumed gravity: "Now, mind, *mademoiselle la modiste*! no more excuses, if you value my favor!"

"Never fear, miss! never fear!—now that I've got the *moire antiques* off my hands."

"What *moire antiques*?"

"Oh! a dozen or so I had in hands, besides satins, brocades, gros de Naples, satin Turques, tarltons, gauzes and Lord knows what—all for 'Lil Smith's party!'"

"Lil Smith's party! and pray who is Lil Smith?"

"Well! to tell the truth, Miss Von Wiegel!" replied the dress-maker with her serious smile, "I know more about her party than I do about herself. I think her father keeps a blacksmith's shop somewhere down town, but, of course, the family lives up town—ever so far up."

"And so they were giving a party lately?"

"A party! oh dear yes, miss! *quite* a party, I assure you! I've been working for it, myself, and the girls—I keep *four*, you know—this last month or five weeks. I guess I made a matter of a hundred dollars by it. But, dear me! ladies, there's more bother—I mean more trouble, with such people than their work is worth. *You* can have no idea of the

way they're wrapt up in dress, and the misery they're in if they see any one of their acquaintances—they have no *friends*—a little finer rigged out than themselves. And as sure as one is seen in a new dress—especially if it's anything past the common, all the rest are on the alert and never know rest or peace till they get one like it—or better, if they can."

"Well! I must say," observed the young lady very gently, "that I cannot understand such a state of affairs. but do you mean to say that the whole city is bitten with this foolish mania?"

"Indeed I do, miss!—it's like a plague it's got to be, and I tell you it ruins more families and makes more misery than *any* plague. What's worst of all, it brings tens of thousands of poor unfortunate girls to destruction that might be virtuous and honest if it wasn't for it. It does as much mischief as rum or gin—indeed, indeed it does!"

"Why, Waldron!" said the old lady raising herself in her chair, "you seem to forget that you make your living by this same folly!"

"If it please you, madam! I do not forget," said the really intelligent and right-minded *modiste* with mournful solemnity: "I know I live by it, and as there are plenty to do it if I don't, I'm glad to have it for a means of living. If the love of dress—one might call it the *worship* of dress—could be confined to the rich it wouldn't be half so bad, and, perhaps, I'd never say a word against it, but when it gets in

among the working-classes, and the poor, it's then it does the harm, and too often brings want and hardship, and sin and shame with it. Oh! if you only knew the ruin it causes both to body and soul amongst the poor working girls of this one city—as *well as I do*—you wouldn't wonder to hear me speak as I do!—of course I *wouldn't* speak so only I know I'm in the presence of *real* ladies and good Christians, too, that care nothing about dress only just to keep themselves covered decently, a body might say!"

"In the spirit of our mother Eve when *she* commenced dressmaking," said Bertha archly.

"Ah ha, miss! there you have me again;" and Miss Waldron, in a pleasant little excitement, hastened to apologize for having made so free as to gabble away before two such ladies, then taking up the bundle desired to know if she would leave it up stairs before she went away.

"Der deyvil! no, you shan't!" said a grumbling voice from behind a large old-fashioned Indian screen at the farther end of the room, and Jan, shuffling forward as fast as his heavy bulk would permit, laid hold of the bundle. "No, you shan't," said he, "I go up myself mit it. You go 'bout your business way from Betty. No more silk dresses—I tell you dat now!"

And the old servitor nodded emphatically at the obnoxious *modiste*. The ladies looked at each other and smiled.

"But pray, Jan!" said his young mistress, "how came *you* in the room?"

Jan looked sheepish enough as he stammered out by way of apology: "Dat ole Shinese fellow dat ole Madam tell me to fix up dis morning——"

"Hush—sh—sh!" said Bertha with an authoritative gesture, "you terrible old man! have I not told you before that that statue represents a Christian missionary in Japan?"

"Yah! well *him* —de Chrishin mishin man—I was—I was——"

Miss Waldron could hardly keep her countenance, the old lady turned her face towards the fire, and Bertha, assuming a very stern look, said:

"Never mind what you were doing to the Christian missionary, but show Miss Waldron out, and mind, Jan!" holding up her finger, "mind, no saucy talk on the way!"

Miss Waldron made the same profound reverence as on entering, and retired, promising to bring Miss Von Wiegel's dress on an early day of the following week.

The early tea of the small family was long over, and whilst Jan proceeded to close the shutters, and stir the fire, and place the chess-table in front of the old Madam's chair, the ladies conversed in French on the prevailing extravagance in dress, following up the train of thought suggested by Miss Waldron's sensible remarks.

"It is something very strange," said Bertha, as she

turned over the leaves of the large volume before mentioned—it was an old German “Lives of the Saints,” published at Munich. “It is something very strange that in none of the old European capitals—not even excepting Paris—does this vanity of dress and show exercise so potent an influence or engross so much attention as it does here in this comparatively new city.”

“And yet it is not so *very* strange, my dear, when you come to think of it,” replied her mother. “It is precisely because of their *newness* that New York and some other American cities are so much given to the frivolities of fashion. It is the natural effect of the levelling institutions of the country. In new countries like this where the lines of distinction between the different classes of society are not so clearly defined, the people—never much given to reflection—fall into the very natural but very absurd error of supposing that fine dress, fine houses and fine furniture will command that distinction which in older countries and a more refined state of society belongs only to birth, social position, cultivation of taste and refinement of manners. The great majority of the people in this part of the New World have drifted hither from old Europe in search of a bare living, denied them at home—being here, they very often succeed in making not only a living but a fortune.”

“And having made the fortune they must lead

the fashions and astonish others who are not so lucky as themselves."

"Precisely, my dear!—they know of no other way to distinguish themselves. So the malaria generated in the hot-bed of folly in what is facetiously called 'good society' speedily infects every class in the community till it becomes the plague our good *modiste* not unaptly designates it. From the parlor it spreads to the kitchen, thence to the workshop, and so on through the whole range of states and callings."

The chess-men were now arranged on the board in battle-array, and the mischievous pranks of dame Fashion were soon forgotten in the quiet excitement of the noble game.



CHAPTER V.

A FASHIONABLE WEDDING WITH OTHER MATTERS THERETO
APPERTAINING.

THE Gallaghers had their new house completed and moved into it in due form. The Fogartys had been some two or three months settled in theirs. Great doings followed these auspicious events. "House-warmings" were, of course, given, and a series of grand entertainments "came off" by way of *return*. The fashionable circle in which the Gallaghers and Fogartys made their evolutions was kept in a delightful state of commotion that whole winter, and no less than eight matches came off during and immediately after the festivities. Amongst these was one which united the rival houses of Gallagher and Fogarty just as a similarly auspicious event united the houses of York and Lancaster. Would that we could say the union of Sam Fogarty, the eldest hope of his house, with Eliza the matronly head of the six Miss Gallaghers, had, indeed, united the rival factions, and for ever terminated the strife of jealousy. But, alas! the strife of Fashion is no less bitter than the strife of blood, and at times its effects are more enduring. The two families met, it would seem as one, on the joyous occasion—the calumet was smoked around the council-fire where

the elders came together to arrange preliminaries, and the hatchet was buried for ever and a day. Tom Gallagher and his wife were well pleased to get Eliza off their hands just when she was verging on "the upper shelf" of maidenhood, and as Sam was known to be of business habits, and had just been taken into partnership by his father, the prospects were most favorable. The Fogartys, on the other hand, were just as well satisfied, seeing that although Tom did not feel it convenient to give Eliza anything in the shape of a dower, he went shares in fitting up a fine house for the young couple, and promised something handsome after his death—which event was a dim perspective, for Tom had apparently as good a hold on life as either of the contracting parties.

So the course of true love *did* run smooth on this occasion—perhaps owing to its greater depth. It had but a short way to run, however, for about six weeks after Sam had whispered the first "soft thing" into Eliza's "well-pleased ear," he boldly and resolutely "popped the question," and in two weeks after bagged his game—was blessed with the hand (and probably the heart) of the fair Eliza, and like the baron that "dazzled the eyes and bewilder'd the brain" of the faithless and "fair Imogene," he in blissful triumph bore her from the paternal roof,

"And carried her home as his bride."

The carrying home, however, was a rather more circuitous affair than the worthy ancestors of the

happy couple could at all have realized in *their* day. Some fifteen hundred miles of the American Continent—perhaps we might say two thousand—had to be steamed over by land and water before the *Samuel C. Fogarty, Esq.*, whose marriage with *Eliza, eldest daughter of T. Gallagher, Esq.*, the city papers had recorded in such flourishing style, arrived with his fair yoke-fellow at the door of the Gallagher mansion one dreary wet evening in early Spring from the Hudson River Railroad depot in Chambers street.

On the day of the wedding a large party of the friends and relatives assembled by previous invitation to witness the ceremony in —— street Church—which mode of expression New York Fashion substitutes for the dedicatory name of the Church. A sumptuous breakfast awaited the return of the new-married couple, with their four bridesmaids and as many groomsmen (or standers-up with the groom rather)—and a dozen or so of “favored guests.” At the close of their splendid repast, adorned and appetized with all the art and skill which a fashionable *restaurateur* and an equally fashionable confectioner could bring to bear on the *viandes, pâtés, confitures* and all the rest, the happy couple (with the two Miss Gallaghers next in seniority to Eliza) started on a tour to Niagara Falls, thence by the lower lakes to Toronto and Kingston, thence by the St. Lawrence and its Thousand Isles and its surging Rapids to Montreal and Que-

bee, thence by Lake Champlain and the Hudson River Railroad back to New York and "the old house at home," where a family-party was assembled to meet them, as their near approach had been duly transmitted "over the wires."

It was Sam's boast ever after that his wedding-tour had cost him a matter of a thousand dollars—not altogether for the travelling expenses but, of course, the girls—meaning his bride and her two sisters—had so many knick-knacks to buy in the various cities along the route that it took that, at least, to clear him of the *tour*.

On the day when the happy couple started at once on their honeymoon and their tour, Henry Hackett was holding a colloquy over the counter with a smart middle-aged woman of that description which the Scotch Lowlanders would call "douce" and we neat and comely. She had got through with her business in the store, merely giving an order, and was now engaged in a sociable chat with the shop-keeper.

"So you tell me you weren't at the wedding, Mr. Hackett?"

"Is it me, Betty? oh! then, indeed, I wasn't—we all got an invitation to go to the Church in the morning, but that was all. The girls went because they wanted to see how the bride and bridesmaids looked and what they wore—as for Michael and myself you may be sure we didn't bother ourselves going next or nigh them. We knew well enough they didn't

want us there, so we took precious good care not to trouble them."

"You done just what you ought to do, Mr. Hackett?" said Betty with more emphasis than the occasion seemed to require; "it's too good for them you'd be, the best day ever they'll see—the conceit of them people and the airs they put on them is past the common! Not to ask *you*—and you at the door with them! Och, then, Henry!" drawing a step nearer and throwing more feeling into her voice, "how different it was at home when a young couple went together!"

"You may well say that, Betty Haucher!" replied Henry with an unobtrusive sigh; "many a good wedding I was at in my early days at home in Ireland where there was full and plenty for all comers and a cheerful welcome into the bargain—where all that came were friends and well-wishers and brought joy and happiness with them to the feast. It isn't to have their *comether* on what this one or that one wore, or to see who'd make the greatest show—no—no—no! they went there because they knew they were welcome, and wanted to help up the fun and the harmless merriment, and to show their good wish to the bride and groom. The only rivalry betwixt them was to see who'd hold out the longest when they got footing it away in the evening, or maybe who'd get the most countenance from his reverence at the head of the dinner-table, where he sat in state with the bride on one side and the groom

on the other. And then the hauling-home a week or two after, and the horsemen all riding for *the bottle*!—oh, Betty! Betty! them were something *like* weddings! There were no silks, or satins, or jewelry, or frizzled locks—no receptions or wedding-towers, but there was peace, plenty and contentment—and that's what there isn't at your *fashionable* weddings here, for under all them fine dresses there's a fire of one kind or another scorching every heart—and, everything is cold and grand and *deceitful*!”

“Dear knows an' it's true for you,” said Betty wiping a tear from her eye; “the people at home had their heart in everything of the kind—whether it was wedding or christening, or hauling-home or what it was; but sure there can't be much heart in such things here where all's for show, and every one's trouble is to cut a greater dash than their neighbors. Still I'm not sayin,' Henry! but I like a bit of dress as well as another, and would wish, if I could come at it, to turn out decently myself on a Sunday when I go to Church—I got a new silk dress, as elegant a one as you'd see, about a month ago, but if I didn't dear buy it my name's not Betty Haucher!”

“Why, how was that, Betty?” asked Henry Hackett trying to suppress a smile.

“Oh! you see our ladies never want to see the likes of me wear silk at all—they have such odd notions about dress, you never seen anything *like*

it—and then Jan was outrageous in a manner to see me layin' out the money, though I'm sure it was my own hard earning. How-and-ever he has a black face on him ever since and will hardly open his lips to me. So between my old man's sulky face and the smiles and hints of the old Madam and Miss Bertha I tell you I've got the worth of it—I have so !”

“Now that you speak of your ladies,” said Henry with renewed attention—“and its *ladies* you may call them—are they Germans, or Americans, or what?”

“Americans?—not they, indeed! Guess again, now,” said Betty, laughing.

Henry half closed his eyes and looked at her very shrewdly. “Well! what *can* I guess? They can't be Irish—that's plain——”

“Is it, indeed?”

“Why, of course it is. Sure there never was such a name as Von Wiegel in Ireland?”

“Like enough; but then there *was* in the Rhine country, wherever that is—and a grand old name it seems it is—so our Jan tells me, and you know he comes from there himself——”

“The Rhine country!—where's this that is? I must ask Michael—he's a great hand at ge-o-gra-phy——”

Michael being summoned to the council-board—the counter, namely—was not long in furnishing the desired information, which was promptly caught hold of by his father :

"Why, then, to be sure it *is* Jarmany; what came over me that I forgot it—and so, Betty! your ladies are Dutch——"

"No, they're *not* Dutch," said Betty gruffly, her untutored ear rejecting the word, probably on account of certain associations connected with it.

"If they're from the Rhine country," said the erudite Michael, "they're not *Dutch*, father!—they're Germans!"

"Poh! nonsense, man! it's all the same——"

"Why, no, father! it isn't the same, begging your pardon——"

"And what's the difference, Michael?" asked the father with seeming impatience, but real satisfaction, being well pleased to draw out the full extent of his son's geographical knowledge before his old acquaintance, Betty Connelly, who was from the door with him at home.

"Why the difference isn't much, father!" said Michael with that dry humor which was peculiar to him, "only that the Dutch come from Holland and the Germans from Germany—that's all."

Harry looked at Betty, as much as to say: "Isn't he a knowledgeable chap for his age?" and Betty looked at Harry as much as to say: "I protest he is!"

"Well! well!" said Harry aloud, "that'll do—you may go back to your work, Michael!" Michael had been weighing and making up tiny parcels of tea, sugar, &c., &c., to have ready when required

for the greater dispatch of business.

"And so, Betty! your ladies are Dutch—I mean Jarman?"

"One of them is *half* Jarman, the other whole Irish," answered Betty with a certain degree of pride that was not unnatural under the circumstances, and also with a certain emphasis, as though she calculated on giving her "*towny*" an agreeable surprise.

"Irish! do you tell me so?"

"Indeed, then, I do, Mr. Hackett! the old Madam is Irish—and Irish to the back-bone, for all she comes of some high-up Prodestan family—black Prodestans all belongin' to her—and herself was one, too, till long after she married the old Ritter. They say *he* was a mighty good man, and a noble fine Catholic."

"And where did he fall in with the old lady?"

"Ah! she was a *young* lady then—and a beautiful young lady she must have been! He met her at home in Ireland, just at her father's castle, for, you see, the Ritter was a fine young gentleman then, too, and was on his travels, and bein' in Ireland he went to see this old castle where the Madam was brought up—it was a great sight, Jan says, an' all the grand quality from abroad used to go to have a look at it when they'd be in that part of the country. So that's the way they fell in together."

"But how did the family come to be here?" asked Michael who had managed to keep within hearing,

for there was something in this story—broken and fragmentary as it was—that struck a chord in Michael's heart, which organ contained, amongst other component parts, a certain *quantum* of romance, all the stronger, perhaps, for being pent up in a small corner and necessarily concealed from the outer world. "How did the Von Wiegels come to be in New York?"

"Why, Michael!" said his father, "did you never hear of the Von Wiegels before now?"

"Well no, except seeing the name on our own books, since Betty got us the custom of the family."

"But, you booby! aren't the Von Wiegels one of the oldest Dutch families——"

"Jarman, Mr. Hackett!" put in Betty.

"Well! well! it's always Dutch *I* heard them called—old Dutch—but whatever they are, Dutch or Jarman, I've heard of them this many a year as one of the first families here, and the oldest."

"But my old master—the Ritter—Heaven rest his soul! wasn't here till about ten years ago, when he fell into all the Von Wiegel property in New York, on the death of his brother that died unmarried."

"And was your young lady brought up here?"

"Oh dear no, Mr. Hackett! she was brought up in Jarmany and in Ireland—she was most of her time in Ireland, though, with her mother's people—it seems her grandmother and one of her aunts had turned Catholic—for she didn't care to come out to

America when the old lady and gentleman came, and they were so wrapped up in her, you see, that they wouldn't cross her, so, to please her, they let her stay on and on with her grandmother and her aunts and uncles, at the old castle in Ireland, until she came out post-haste herself when she got word of her father being in bad health. But, Lord bless me! here I am clattering away, and they'll be wondering at home what in the world kept me so long—Jan will have my life, for he wants to go down town on some business for the old mistress. God be with ye, Mr. Hackett! till I see you again, and mind you don't forget to send the things as soon as you can!"

The Miss Hacketts were not so philosophical as their father with regard to the slight put upon them by the Gallaghers. They had gone to some expense to provide suitable dresses for the grand party that was to follow the reception, counting on an invitation which they had every reason to expect, seeing that they had been invited to witness the ceremony. The shock was dreadful, then, when after two weeks of all but certain expectation they found themselves disappointed. The bridal party returned, and preparations were set on foot for "the party." A week or two after, the grand reception took place, followed by a ball and supper for the *elite*—but, alas! the miss Hacketts were consigned to dull oblivion—no invitation had been sent them, and they were reduced to the dire necessity of stayin'

at home all that weary day, and watching from their old station behind the blinds the current and counter-current of Fashion sweeping in and out of No. 66 through the stately door which lay invitingly open—not so much, we suppose, in remembrance of the penalty imposed by that strong-minded princess, Granu Wail of happy memory, on the inhospitable Barons of Howth, for having their doors closed at meal-time, as to expedite the labor of ushering the guests in and out, which that day devolved on an extremely dandified colored gentleman in white kids.

Truly it was a hard trial for the patience of the Miss Hacketts to witness so imposing a display of Fashion and magnificence from which they were cruelly debarred. As carriage after carriage rolled up—most of them from “the stands,” it is true, but then our New York hacks are quite different from those of poor “doited” old Europe—they are really splendid affairs, equally fit to grace a fashionable wedding and a fashionable funeral—and each deposited its load of gents, “puffed, powdered and shaved,” and ladies in full dress, with opera-cape on back and satin slippers on feet, heads that might have ornamented barbers’ windows, they were such perfect miracles of the *fri seur*’s art—and as much gold on necks, bosoms, wrists and fingers as would have stocked a nice little store in Broadway for a jeweller commencing trade—as all this vision of glory passed before the eyes of the lone watchers at the window

of the shabby two-story brick, and they recognized one after another of their former schoolmates and present (occasional) companions, oh! it was gall and wormwood—a pretty hard dose to swallow! so hard, indeed, that it brought the tears to the six fair eyes of the three disconsolate Miss Hacketts.

They had no resource—none in the wide world—but to imitate the fox in the fable and cry “sour grapes!” and “sour grapes!” they did cry with a vengeance. They all at once made the astonishing discovery that if the Gallaghers *had* asked them they wouldn’t have gone. Not they, indeed! Lil Smith’s party was everything fine compared to this odious reception, &c. Why really it was very lucky they (the Miss Hacketts) were *not* invited, for it would have only placed them under the rather disagreeable necessity of refusing, and that would have been a mortal offence! There was little philosophy and less religion in the resignation “put on for the nonce,” but the very assumption of it, and the effort made by each sister to deceive the others into a belief of her individual sincerity, did at least produce a degree of composure, in part arising from positive anger at the ill-treatment the young ladies thought they had received from the Gallaghers, and the Fogartys, and “the whole set of them.” In that frame of mind the sisters felt as though they could not possibly have met any of the offending parties, and they were fain to fall back on their dignity. They went to work, however, with right good will on the acid

ity of the fruit before mentioned. The general appearance of the company as they drove up and alighted, and swept up the steps, furnished an inexhaustible theme. This one's dress was an odious color, that one's opera-cloak was horrible, one's dress was shamefully short, another's so long that she ought to have had "a darkey to hold up her train," one young lady's blue shaded silk was positively declared by Sarah Eugenia to have been the property of an elder sister—goodness gracious! was she sure of that? Quite, quite, *quite* sure—hadn't she, Miss Sarah-Eugenia Hackett, seen it a score of times on Winifred-Jane Mulroony before she was married, and how could so sharp-sighted a young lady be mistaken when she saw it before her eyes on Pamela-Rosana, the younger sister of the disposed-of Winifred-Jane? They might have had two the same was suggested by Mary-Wilhelmina.

"I tell you they hadn't any such thing!" retorted the elder sister; "if they had we'd have seen them on them together sometimes; but we never did, you know! and besides, I'd swear that's Winny's old dress; I'd know it among a thousand, for the upper flounce was put on crooked. I often noticed it; and besides it was a little faded in the front. *I tell you that's it.* My! did you ever see such a thing! to go to a reception with an old cast-off dress like that! But it's just good for the Gallaghers; they wouldn't ask them that knew better, and would have made a *decent* turn-out! La! if I

was Pamela I wouldn't be seen at a reception in *that* old thing; if I didn't have better I'd stay at home."

A roar of laughter from the others here cut short the vehement harangue, and the fair declaimer asked all in a flurry, "Where—where—what is it?"

"Oh do look there, Sarah! for goodness' sake do!"

A carriage had just driven up to No. 66, and from it had just alighted honest John Smith, in the identical nether-garments and frock-coat, the scant proportions of which had afforded so much amusement at and after his daughter's memorable party.

"Well! upon *my* word! if that a'nt rich!—but stay, let us see what's coming!"

"Oh dear! oh dear! Mrs. Smith herself as fat as ever and stuffed into the very identical same copper-colored satin!—but to be sure she has a pink opera-cape trimmed with white swan's down—and *such* a stylish cap—well! after that!"

"Stop! stop! there's Lil! let us see what *she* has got on! A beautiful new silk I declare! my! that is lovely!"

"Lovely!" cried Sarah, with a gesture of contempt, "why, Ann-Wilhelmina! where *are* your eyes? A flaring, glaring pink! It's excessively vulgar!"

"Well! now, I don't think so," put in the younger sister, "I'm like Ann—I admire that pink, and I really think it looks sweet with that nice black trimming, and that elegant black lace scarf thrown over it——"

"Elegant, indeed!" repeated Sarah with ineffable contempt, "much *you* know about what's elegant, or what's not, Mary! When pa brought home that horrid old daub of a picture the other day, you must go and tell him it was elegant, though it wasn't worth carrying home, and there we have it now for an ornament whether we like it or no—just look at it, now! a'nt it elegant?" And she mimicked Mary's tone so accurately that the younger sister bristled up, and was about to make a very saucy answer when Michael's waggish little old-fashioned face appeared at the door, which he had noiselessly opened a little way and was peeping in evidently much amused by what was going on.

"That's right, girls! that's right! calm weather's dull weather. How goes the reception?"

"Like yourself, Mike! so—so!"

"I guess'd as much."

"Why so, you jack-a-napes?"

"How could it go well when the three Miss Hacketts are not there?" A race was made towards Michael, intent unknown, but Michael was too nimble for the "womankind," and the Graces returned to their station at the window out of breath from their wild-goose chase and the laughter following thereupon.

That evening when Michael came up to tea after his father had gone down to replace him in the store, he renewed the subject, and asked his sisters what notes of observation they had taken.

"None at all," was the sullen answer.

"Why, can't you tell us who was there—who went in, I mean? Did you see Miss Von Wiegel?"

The girls were immediately on the alert. "Why my no, Michael! how could we see *her*? sure that's the grand lady Miss Waldron told us about! we'd give anything at all to see her."

"Well!" said Michael very composedly, "*I* saw her this afternoon—and was speaking to her, too!"

"Dear me! Michael, how did you come to see her?" chorused the sisters.

"I didn't *come*—I *went*—with the groceries."

"The groceries! why you don't mean to say the Von Wiegels deal with pa?"

"They just do, then, and I went home with the groceries that their servant-woman ordered."

"Well! well! and what did you see? who did you see?"

"I saw a nice, cozy old-fashioned house over on the ——— Avenue, a great Newfoundland dog lying on a mat in the porch, and he barked at me as I passed—he did, indeed, girls!"

"Well?"

"A great tall clock in the kitchen, going tick, tick, tick, as natural as life, and a range with a beautiful bright fire in it blazing away like fun through the bars——"

"Well, well, and what more?"

"And a thick-set, sour-looking German servant called Jan, and his wife Betty—an Irishwoman from

father's place at home—it was she that got the ladies to give *us* their custom——”

“But what else. I mean who else did you see?”

“I saw—Miss Von Wiegel!”

“What! in the kitchen?”

“Yes! in the kitchen!”

“And what on earth was she doing there?”

“Cooking!”

“Cooking!”—“Miss Von Wiegel cooking!”—“My goodness; and what was she cooking?”

“I didn't ask her,” said Michael drily; “Betty tells me she's always making nice things to try and coax the old lady to eat because she hasn't much of an appetite.”

“And did she speak to you, Michael?”

“She did.”

“And what—what did she say?”

“She asked me *to go over and have an air of the fire.*”

“‘An air of the fire!’—my! that's just what any common Irish person would say!”

“Well! Irish or no Irish that's what *she* said.”

“But what did she wear, Michael?”—“Yes! yes! Michael! tell us what sort of dress she had on.”

“Some kind of a brown stuff, I think you women call it Coburg, and a black silk apron and a small linen collar!”

“Nonsense, Michael! you're only making fun of us!——

"Just as if a grand young lady like Miss Von Wiegel would be seen wearing a common Coburg!"

"How green he takes us to be!"

"Well! green or blue, I tell you what I saw," said Michael with unmistakeable sincerity; "you may believe me or not, just as you please!"

The sisters saw plainly that Michael was in earnest, and, what was more, they could not get another word out of him about the Von Wiegels. They were so shocked, however, at what they had heard, that the family fell several degrees in their estimation, and they speedily arrived at the sapient conclusion that they (the Von Wiegels) were "no so great shakes after all!"

Michael turned a look on them as he left the room that made them feel smaller than they ever thought to feel themselves, and they heard him singing as he descended the stairs:

"The ladies all are come to town,
They're ever so neat and handy, O!
The red, the fair, the black, the brown,
Mavrone, but they're the dandy, O!"



CHAPTER VI.

MORNING CALLS AT RHEINFELDT HOUSE.

MADAM VON WIEGEL and her daughter were sitting together with their work-table before them one bright forenoon, a few days after the grand reception at Tom Gallagher's. The old lady was knitting a stocking, and Bertha was embroidering a piece of black velvet with white and silver beads. The room in which they sat was large and cheerful, with two windows on either side, so that it evidently ran the length, or rather the breadth of the house. The furniture was rich and heavy, but of a style long exploded in the New York world of fashion. The hangings were of dark brown damask, trimmed with that deep yellow fringe, with small brown tassels intermixed, a style of trimming quite common in well-furnished houses some fifty or sixty years since, but now numbered with the things that were and are no longer. The frames of the large mirrors were rich and massive, but somewhat tarnished by the rust of time, and the antique sofas, and ottomans, and tabourets, all covered with plain hair-cloth, would, no doubt, have been voted "awfully shabby" by the fashionable ladies of the vicinity. A glance at the venerable time-piece on the mantel-shelf, and the portrait over it reminded you of the room in which

we first saw the mother and daughter, and another glance around soon convinced you that it was the same apartment. The Indian screen stood in a remote corner, and the little claw-footed table was beside the large, deep *fauteuil* that still occupied a place near the fire. The furniture was all plain, as I have said, but a closer inspection showed various articles of *virtu* which denoted at once the refined taste and ample means of the owners. There were bronzes of antique form and curious workmanship that looked as though they might have graced some patrician dwelling in Pompeii or Herculaneum; there were statuettes, and urns, and Etruscan vases, whose graceful forms and exquisite sculpture bespoke their Italian origin; there were paintings, some three or four, that seemed to be copies of the old masters, chiefly Murillo, one of whose glorious Madonnas, a half-figure, hung opposite the ladies where they sat. There was but one portrait in the room, the one to which I have before alluded. It was a venerable gentleman with a fair, fresh, placid countenance, decidedly German in outline, lineaments and expression. The forehead was high and bald, and the few scattered locks that shaded the temples were white with the snows of age. The costume was such as we usually see on the gentlemen of Washington's time, and a scroll of parchment in his hand indicated either a member of the bar, or, more probably still, of the Senate.

The ladies had been talking of certain scenes in

the vicinity of Castle Mahon where the mother had been brought up and where the daughter had spent so many of the years of her life.

"Yes!" said the old lady with a natural sigh, and a fixed abstracted look, "I remember them all as though I had seen them but yesterday. The green swelling hills sloping down to the rich holmes by the river side—the dark woods broken into picturesque forms—the craggy rocks jutting here and there through their tufted foliage—the huge pile of grey stones crowning the grassy hillock——"

"Ha! the Druid's seat!" interrupted Bertha, with a flushed cheek and a kindling eye; "yes! yes! I remember *that*"—her mother lifted her head and looked at her through her gold-mounted spectacles.

"I should think you would," she said, rather dryly, "it used to form quite a prominent object in the landscape."

"And what an object, mother!" said Bertha with a tremor in her voice that she tried to conceal by talking on in a hurried and somewhat excited manner, "what a vignette it would make for a work on Irish Archæology sitting there on its 'bonnie broom knowe' in the sylvan glade, that old, old memento of Ireland's elder day! It carries the mind back to the ante-Christian period of Irish history when the Druids held men's souls and bodies in thrall, and exercised their priestly functions at the cromleach hard by, and worshipped in the shade of the sacred grove that crowned the neighboring hill. The

grove is gone ages since, but the cromleach remains——”

“And the judgment-seat,” added the mother, and again she fixed her calm eyes on Bertha’s face. “The vignette, you know! By the bye, Bertha! did you ever hear any of the wild traditions connected with that chair?”

“Y—yes, no—yes, I believe——”

“A very satisfactory answer, truly,” said her mother with a faint smile. “And, pray my very lucid and intelligible daughter, what *did* you hear in relation to the Druid’s Chair?”

“Why, mother!” said Bertha, with great apparent simplicity, “I *read* many speculations concerning it in the pages of our learned antiquaries——”

“There is more said ‘concerning it’ by the firesides of the peasantry,” said her mother pointedly, “and I marvel much if a young lady so fond of traditional lore can have failed to learn the weird character of the Druid’s Chair, and the strange tales told of it around Castle Mahon——”

A shadow fell on Bertha’s face; it might be a passing cloud that cast it, but no cloud, however charged with electric force, could cause the creeping shudder that ran through her frame. She laughed, nevertheless, and muttered to herself with Isabella in the Fatal Marriage

“Would I were past the hearing!”

She looked round the room—no figure was to be

seen more life-like than the Christian Missionary on the mantel-piece at the other end of the apartment, or the beautiful Madonna looking down so lovingly from the canvass opposite. Bertha's eyes rested a moment on the gracious countenance, and somehow the sight seemed to compose her shaken nerves.

"Mother!" said she, laughing again, but this time more naturally, "Mother, I had no idea you were so curious in such matters. For myself, I—I—have heard so many legends connected with every spot in the romantic region where my youth was past that I cannot immediately call up any one distinctly from the misty haze wherein they dwell 'dim in their dark-brown years,' as Ossian says. Some other time I will try to remember—what I strongly suspect you know better than I do myself," she added with an arch smile.

Much to her relief the door opened, and Jan appeared to announce two ladies who respectively announced themselves as Mrs. Susanna L. Bumford and Mrs. Jedediah Hopington. There was an air of respectability about these ladies, that is to say they were richly and gravely clad, and their demeanor was that of well-bred persons, so that Madam Von Wiegel and her daughter stood up to receive them, and having exchanged distant but polite salutations with the visitors, requested them to be seated—then quietly waited to ascertain the object of their visit.

Mrs. Bumford spoke first, very slowly and very

distinctly. "We took the liberty of calling Madam Von Wiegel on behalf of the —— Ward Mission, and the schools connected with it." She took out a book and pencil. "May we hope to have the honor of your name and——"

"And the benefit of my subscription," said Madam Von Wiegel with a smile. "Well! ladies, I have no objection to subscribe, but I should like to know exactly what I am subscribing *for*. Pray what is the nature of this Mission?"

"It is rather strange, madam! that you should not have heard before now of an institution so every way important," observed Mrs. Hopington in a strong nasal twang indicative of Down-East origin.

"It is rather unfortunate, at least," said the old lady still smiling, "but having admitted my ignorance, will *you* be so good as to enlighten me? What is the nature of the Mission—what are its objects?"

"The nature of the Mission," began Mrs. S. L. Bumford, pitching her voice on a somewhat higher key——

"Thank you," said Bertha speaking for the first time, "but my mother is *not* deaf, her hearing is remarkably good." And she smiled blandly.

More than a little disconcerted by this quiet sarcasm, good Mrs. Bumford found it necessary to cough once or twice before she recovered the thread of her discourse.

"The nature of the Mission—is—benevolent," said she, "and its objects—strictly charitable."

"Strictly charitable, are they?"

"Yes, except in so far as they are industrial."

"Very good, indeed, and very laudable. And who are principally the recipients of the Mission's bounty?"

"The degraded—and utterly abandoned creatures—who are huddled together—in the wretched—and some of them ruinous—abodes—so common in that Ward."

"Of course, my dear Mrs. Bumford, you mean the *children* of those unhappy people," suggested her colleague; "you know it would not be possible for the Mission to do anything with the parents."

"And why, my dear madam?" questioned her attentive listener very, very calmly.

"Oh dear, Madam Von Wiegel! *they* are hopeless;—so addicted are they to idleness, drunkenness, blasphemy, and, in short, everything bad, that there a'nt any chance whatsoever of benefiting *their* condition. The degrading superstitions of Popery have besotted them to such a degree that their blindness is incurable—it really is; they are of those of whom it is written that they are abandoned to their own wickedness—yea, to the perversity of their evil ways."

"Who *are* these unfortunate people?" demanded the old lady.

"Chiefly low Irish and Italians."

"And you have no hope of benefiting *them*, but count on saving their children?"

"Precisely, madam!" said Mrs. Bumford; "the wretched parents are beyond the reach of spiritual succor. What do you think a horrid low Irishwoman told one of our fellow-laborers the other day, when she endeavored to move her hardened heart to repentance?"

"I really cannot guess, but I should like to hear."

"Well! she told her, my dear madam!—Excuse me—I actually tremble, so that I can—hardly—venture to—repeat the wicked words. They are too shocking for Christian ears to hear or Christian tongue to utter."

"Pray compose yourself, and favor us so far! My daughter and I have tolerably strong nerves."

"Well!" said Mrs. Bumford, making a desperate effort to expel the soul-defiling words from her Christian mouth: "She told our dear Christian sister that *the devil was the first Protestant*—she did, indeed, Madam Von Wiegel! and that people could get to heaven without ever reading the Bible——"

"What a degree of hardihood she must have had, that 'low Irishwoman!'"

"But that wasn't the worst of it, my dear madam!" said Mrs. Hopington, coming to the rescue of her dear exhausted sister.

"Indeed! Why I should think, after throwing the Bible overboard, and tracing the pedigree of

Protestantism up to the arch-rebel Lucifer, your 'low Irishwoman' could go no farther."

"She did, though. She told us we were all a set of humbugs, going about preaching religion to them that had the true religion, if they only had the grace to practice it, and that it would be fitter for us be at home darning our stockings than trying to inveigle poor children from their lawful par-ents, and get them in by hook or by crook to our Mission-house."

"How insulting!"

"How shockingly rude!" ejaculated the mother and daughter.

"Was it not?—but what do you think the vile creature called our Mission?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Well! she called it a man-trap."

"*Soul-trap*, dear! I think was the word," suggested the other Missionary very gently

"Yes, so it was,—well! she called it a soul-trap, and said it would be better for the poor children caught in it that they died of hunger on the streets than eat bread and meat of our providing. Wasn't that fearful, Madam Von Wiegel?"

"Very fearful, indeed!—but may I ask—in order to ascertain how far the woman was wrong and how far right—how do you provide for these children so tenderly cared for, as you say, by the ladies and gentlemen of the Mission? You cannot keep them always as pensioners on your bounty?"

"Of course not, madam! we have another society called The Children's Aid Society which takes charge of them after we have given them a certain amount of education, and sends them out West where, being disentangled from the evil surroundings of their miserable home and those degraded connections who could only prove a curse to them in after life and retard their progress in every way, they can enter on a new career with a fair chance for success."

"Very prudent on the part of the Mission!—And the friends so cut off—do they never give any trouble in the way of claiming their own flesh and blood?"

"Once in a while they do, but they are generally so poor—owing to their vicious way of living—that they cannot do much. Of course, the authorities are all with us; having a truly paternal interest in the unfortunate victims they are well disposed to protect them even against their own wretched parents, so that we have nothing to fear from *them*."

"And so——?"

"And so we—that is the Society—changes the children's names and sends them off to the branch-societies in various parts of the Union——"

"Where their relatives and friends lose all trace of them, and they grow up—anything and everything except Romanists?"

"Just so, madam!" And forthwith the pocket-book was opened, and the pencil held in readiness. "And now that we have explained the nature and

the objects of our excellent institution in as satisfactory a manner as our poor abilities would permit, shall we not have the honor of receiving your subscription? How much shall I say, madam?"

"*Nothing!*"

"Nothing!" repeated both the Missionaries aghast. "Nothing? did you say 'nothing?'"

"I did," said Madam Von Wiegel, "and I mean what I say."

"Are we, then, to understand that you refuse to subscribe?"

"I do refuse."

"And on what grounds, pray?"

"On very simple grounds," said Madam Von Wiegel rising with dignity, "because I am a Catholic."

"You a Catholic! you, a German lady of high standing, and connected with a family so long and so honorably known here."

"I am fain to hope that German ladies of higher standing than mine are good Catholics," said the old lady with a half smile, "but as it happens, I am *not* German, though my husband *was*."

"And pray what *are* you, then?" said Mrs. Bumford pertly.

"The question is rather impertinent," said Madam Von Wiegel calmly, "but I will not refuse to answer it. I am a countrywoman of that controversial friend of yours who made so uncivilly free with your sectional origin, and I know not but you will set *me* down, too, as 'a low Irishwoman,' for

must own that I have no greater respect than she for religious *humbugs*, and pious kidnappers. Bertha, my dear! be so good as to touch the bell."

Jan appeared on the instant.

"Show those ladies to the door, Jan!" said his mistress.

The ladies stood up, as erect and nearly as rigid as Lot's wife after her transformation. The milk of human kindness—or rather the whey of philanthropy was turned to acrid yeast in the pulmonic region—vulgarly called *breast*—of the two zealous agents of the Fourth Ward Mission, and began so to ferment that an explosion was inevitable before they left the spot.

"Madam Von Wiegel!" began one, all panting with anger, "we are not surprised——"

"No, Mrs. Von Wiegel!" chorused the other, "we are *not* surprised at your unlady-like conduct now that we know what you are!"

"And we *might* have guessed it before, dear! from the way she cross-examined us—only for the respect due to the memory of that man there,* pointing to the portrait over the mantel-piece, "for I suppose that's meant for Johannes Von Wiegel——"

"You are not mistaken," said the lady of the mansion coldly.

"Well! only for *him* and all the other Von Wiegels that *were* a credit to the country and undoubted friends to the Protestant interest—we would have you exposed—as you deserve!"

This brought Bertha to her feet, cold, calm and stern. "Jan!" said she, "show those women to the door—at once!"

Jan stood holding the room-door open and motioning them out with an imperative shake of the head. There was no possibility of further resistance or further delay, so Mrs. Susanna L. Bumford swept grandly from the room, and after her, with a like majestic air, Mrs. Jedediah Hopington, consoling themselves as they traversed the hall with a pithy diatribe, in duetto, on the baneful effects of Popery.

"Well! my dear mother," said Bertha when the door had closed after their visitors, "I knew you had a reasonable stock of patience, but I own you surprised me to-day. I could not have listened to their pharisaical cant half the time."

"Patience were little worth, Bertha! if it did not enable us to bear more than that."

"True; but did it not make your blood boil to hear them describe in such a cool, business-way the nefarious means those people employ to promote the interests of Protestantism?"

"I must confess it did, my dear! but still it did not surprise me—I have seen enough of their manoeuvring in other countries to convince me that hatred of Catholicity is at the bottom of all their philanthropical associations—they may put what name they please on them severally, but that is the basis common to all."

"Well! that is a new phase of New York society

—at least for me,” said Bertha, “but, by the bye, mother! when are you going to answer Aunt Helen’s letter? I have written to Eveleen this morning, and to Uncle Gerald, and I propose adding a post-script to yours when you write, in relation to that sepulchral cairn which has been recently discovered in their vicinity.”

“And the ancient brooch and armlets found therein.”

‘Even so, mother! I am anxious to know whether the brooch corresponds with any of the *fibulæ** described by Walker in his Treatise on the Dress of the Ancient Irish. The collection of specimens in the Dublin Museum is not as full as we could wish—some of the most curious have been bought up from private owners for foreign collections—sold to the highest bidder——’

“Two more ladies!” said Jan, opening the door with a broad grin on his broad face.

“Show them in, Jan!——”

“I wonder what are *these* about,” said Bertha in an under tone, “perhaps Missionaries from some other ward.” She rose, as did her mother, on the entrance of two nondescript animals attired in a fashion half masculine, half feminine, but rather inclining to the former. Jan stood looking after

* The *fibula* was a large brooch of gold or silver, sometimes ornamented with jewels used by the pagan Irish of both sexes for fastening those long cloaks in which we see them represented. They have been dug up in many parts of Ireland.

them as they advanced into the room with an expression of bewildered curiosity that was amusing to see. From the rakish-looking hats that sat so jauntily on their heads to the Turkish trowsers and stout buskins ostentatiously displayed beneath skirts that Diana herself might have gone hunting in without fear of let or hindrance to her divine footsteps. Buckskin gloves, or rather gauntlets with deep leather cuffs attached, completed the costume.

"Mien goot Got!" ejaculated Jan as he left the room and hurried to the kitchen to tell Betty what a curious pair of visitors were in the parlor.

Madam Von Wiegel and her daughter bowed,—the visitors bowed likewise, or rather nodded, and then they seated themselves with the air of persons who felt they had a *right* to be seated stand who would. They were an oddly assorted pair of females, one being uncommonly tall with a dark face and a lowering brow, the other uncommonly short with a little withered, greyish-white visage and small ferret-eyes peering keenly from under the projecting leaf of her "gypsy flat."

It was clear that the ladies were of the Bloomer school, whatever else they might be, and it was just as clear that neither was on the sunny side of forty.

Madam Von Wiegel was about to ask in an ironical tone what fortunate circumstances had procured her the honor of their visit, when the tall lady opened her mouth—it was a good sized organ, too, and

enunciated in loud, emphatic tones—meant probably for masculine—the following words :

“ We are obtaining signatures, ladies, for a petition intended for presentation at the forthcoming session of the Legislature.”

Somewhat surprised, but too polite to show it, Madam Von Wiegel asked very quietly

“ To what does the petition relate ? ”

“ To our *rights*, madam ! ” stamping her foot energetically on the carpet, “ our trampled rights as women.”

“ Oh indeed ! and what particular *rights* are you claiming now at the hands of the Legislature ? ”

“ The right of *speech*, madam ! ” said the tall Amazon with still increasing energy. “ We claim a voice in the councils of the nation—the right to plead the cause of oppressed womanhood at the bar of the Senate, yea, and at the bar of justice—wherever man’s tyranny and injustice and all-grasping selfishness are to be grappled with, and subdued. Men have kept us too long in a state of subjection for which Nature or Nature’s God never designed us. Eve was made free—the equal of Adam——”

“ Pardon me, madam ! I really was under the impression that Adam got dominion over Eve——”

“ All a mistake, madam—all a mistake ! That pleasant fiction was generated in the self-worshipping heart of man.”

“ It has influenced all the inspired writers, then,” said Madam Von Wiegel, a smile playing round the

corners of her mouth and twinkling in her dark eyes. "From Genesis to the Apocalypse the Bible is full of it, and the great Doctor of the Gentiles——"

"A fig for your great Doctor of the Gentiles. Of course you mean Paul, whom nobody minds now-a-days."

"It appears *you* do not, at all events," put in Madam Von Wiegel.

"Certainly not," said the tall champion of woman's rights. "I pretend to a small share of theological and Scriptural acumen myself, seeing that I studied Divinity under a godly professor, who was my father, moreover, according to the flesh, and graduated at one of our first New England colleges——"

She paused, evidently to give her hearers an opportunity of expressing their admiration.

Madam Von Wiegel bowed—Bertha bit her lip, and cast down her eyes very demurely but said nothing. The tall woman was taken aback—the little woman spoke in a little squeaking voice corresponding with her appearance.

"Perhaps we ought to have announced ourselves," said she, "ladies, this is the Reverend Julietta Fireproof, B. A., Bachelor of Arts, and I," she added, raising herself on her toes, in the vain endeavor to reach the height of her own importance, "I, ladies, am *Dorothea Mary Wolstoncroft Brown*, of whom you may probably have heard!"

Madam Von Wiegel bowed again. She could not find in her heart to pull the stilts from under the little woman by telling her the plain unvarnished truth.

"Oh! of course, of course," said the inflated little gas-bag, interpreting the bow according to her wishes—"my lectures on Physiology and Animal Magnetism and Bi-ology have excited no little attention. By the bye, ladies! I lecture to-morrow evening in Extravaganza Hall—allow me to present you with tickets for the course—subjects of great interest and importance, including Woman's Rights, Spiritualism and Negro Slavery!"

"You are very kind," said Madam Von Wiegel with freezing civility, "I have no doubt but we should be entertained and instructed were it in our power to attend your lectures, which, I regret to say, it is not."

"Well, madam!" said the Reverend Miss Fire-proof with a sidelong glance at her companion who had been engrossing much too large a share of the conversation for *her* liking, "well, madam! shall we have the honor of affixing your name to our petition?"

"Most assuredly not, madam!" said the stately Irish lady with marked emphasis; "I belong to a Church that teaches unlimited submission to the Divine Word, and holds with St. Paul that women should *obey* their husbands, and, moreover, keep silent in public assemblies. I see no injustice, therefore, or oppression, in the custom which consigns

us women to the shades of domestic life. I see in it rather a merciful dispensation for us, and a wise provision of the Divine Ruler for the wants of the human family."

"A good morning, ladies!" said the Reverend female with exceeding stiffness and an elevation of her heavy brows, "I find we have been guilty of the folly reprobated by one of old, namely, *throwing pearls before swine*. A good morning to you! Dorothea, let us hence quickly!"

The namesake of Mary Wolstoncroft elevated herself as near as she could to Miss Fireproof's shoulder, and with a look of that belligerent kind commonly identified with *daggers*, she sidled out in the wake of her tall convoy, Jan honoring the pair with the same attention as before during their voyage to the door.

"Jan!" said his mistress, whilst Bertha threw herself on a sofa laughing immoderately, "Jan! mind we are not at home to any more of these visitors."



CHAPTER VII.

A SERENADE AND SOME NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

THERE was one small room in Rheinfeldt house fitted up as an oratory. It had but one window, and that not large, piercing the wall at the height of several feet from the floor; it was an arched window of stained glass, whose sombre tints cast a quiet, subdued light into the little room, that made even the noontide hour soft and dreamy as the evening twilight. Under the window was an altar-shaped table, surmounted by a marble slab, and on it stood a beautiful statue of the Virgin with the Divine Infant in her arms—a work of so rare excellence that it might have been sculptured by the chisel of Canova. At the feet of the statue was a delicate vase of Sevre china, filled with the richly-scented flowers artificially forced into bloom by horticultural skill, even under the icy reign of winter, and on either side stood a silver oil-lamp of antique form; on the wall just beneath the window hung a large ebony crucifix with the Sacred Image carved in purest ivory. Two paintings hung on opposite sides of the room, one a half-length figure of St. Joseph with the miraculous rod in his hand in full blossom, the other representing St. Elizabeth of Hungary taking leave of her beloved spouse on his departure

for the Holy Land. Two small paintings hung on either side the crucifix above the little altar—one was a head of St. Francis of Assissium, the other of St. Agnes the Martyr, both after the manner of Guido, probably copies of two of his.

In front of the altar were two *prie-dieus* cushioned with plain crimson stuff, and three or four chairs were placed along the walls, whilst in one corner opposite the altar was a large arm-chair with a moveable table-shelf attached, on which lay a couple of small volumes.

It was the practice of Madam Von Wiegel and her daughter to say their night-prayers, including the Rosary, before this little altar in the oratory. At nine o'clock precisely the bell summoned Jan and Betty to assist in the family devotions, after which they were dismissed for the night, and the mother and daughter sat reading or conversing for an hour or so in the old lady's chamber, before they, too, sought repose.

On the night following the visit of the eccentric individuals described in the last chapter the house had been long silent, and it seemed as though all slept unconscious of the lovely moonlight that was flooding the world without, and struggling for admission through every cranny of the closed shutters. It was not so; one lone watcher was drinking in the beauty of the night, and in its deep tranquillity finding a balm for feverish agitation. Bertha had sat with her mother later than usual that night, and

they had been talking of matters connected with the daughter's earlier life which had brought a host of memories crowding on her mind, and raised a tumult in her heart which her mother little dreamed of. When she stooped to kiss that beloved mother, as usual after seeing her comfortably settled for the night, an inward voice reproached her for not confiding all to her sympathizing tenderness, and she felt as if a barrier were raised up between them—she would have given worlds to kneel beside her and tell all, all—but some conflicting motive counteracted the impulse, and she merely said "Good night, dear mother! and pleasant dreams!" and closed the curtains with a sigh. Her mother opened them again and looked at her.

"Why, Bertha! my child, you are feverish!" she said; "you must take something."

"No, no, mother, no, no!" said Bertha forcing a laugh; "sleep is the best anodyne, you know! to-morrow, with God's help, I shall be quite, quite well—indeed I am well now; your too great anxiety about me is apt to deceive you. Good night, and try to sleep soon!"

Half an hour after Bertha was kneeling on one of the *prie-dieus* in the oratory, her elbows resting on it, and her face buried in her clasped hands—while the moonlight streaming in through the richly-colored window-panes diffused a warm, picturesque hue over her statue-like figure, the altar, with its graceful accompaniments, resting in partial shade.

Long and silently she prayed in the depth of her own heart; no words broke the holy calm of the hour and the scene, but at times Bertha would raise her face and fix a glance of almost passionate supplication on the sweet face of MARY, where it seemed to look on her through the shades. And Bertha's own face was a miracle of beauty as the deep emotions of her soul passed over it, and the thoughts shut up within her heart like jewels in a casket, flashed from her speaking eyes.

"Mother most mild!" she at length softly murmured, "*you* know how I have struggled to free my heart from this thrall—*you* know how many weary hours I have watched and prayed—ay! even here—with none but God and thee to hear me, and the starry eyes of heaven looking down into my heart of hearts. What I might not tell my earthly mother I have told thee, comfort of the afflicted, and how was it—oh gracious mother, how was it, that even in answer to my prayer—came a whisper of hope to my troubled spirit that stilled its tumult and raised my drooping heart above its own sorrow? Whence comes that voice?—whence the ray of light that faint and far gleams like a star through the darkness?" She had scarcely murmured these words when a strain of music broke soft and sweet on the stilly air floating around as if spirits were breathing the melting tones.

Bertha started to her feet, and shook back the stray tresses of her hair which had fallen around

her face. She stood in the attitude of one whose whole heart and soul were stirred, whose every faculty was absorbed in hearing, the rich color coming and going on her cheek like the first tints of the rosy dawn.

"That air!" she murmured, "*his* favorite, and the flute, too!—are those tones of earthly origin, or who at this lone hour can breathe them here? It may be a dream!"—she muttered, "but if it be, I would never awaken to cold reality!" And moving a step or two back she sank into the old arm-chair in the corner and gave herself up to the entrancing spell of the moment.

The air was that so dear to Scottish hearts and to lovers of true music in every land, the exquisite air of "Lochaber," than which a sweeter or more thrilling never came from the harp-strings of ancient days:

"Farewell to Lochaber and farewell to my Jean
Where heartsome wi' thee I hae mony a day been,
For Lochaber no more, for Lochaber no more
I'll maybe return to Lochaber no more!"

These words of the old ballad were echoing through Bertha's heart with every note of the music, calling up memories long repressed, and,

"Waking thoughts that long had slept,"

till the strength of her stern will was subdued, and she burst into a passionate flood of tears murmuring a name that had not passed her lips for years.

All at once, when the sweet sad melody seemed

dying away in a plaintive cadence on the calm night air, the music broke into a lighter measure which Bertha was not slow in recognizing—it was the heart-stirring Irish air to which the genius of Moore has given fitting expression in “I’d Mourn the Hopes that leave me.” And if ever music breathed a human soul—a human heart—it was in those wild impassioned tones, sad, yet hopefully sad.

Bertha knelt a moment and offered up a fervent prayer before the image of the merciful Mother, then softly closing the oratory, hastened to a window at the end of the adjoining corridor to see whether she could get a sight of the minstrel, who, by this time, was making her heart-strings quiver with the plaintive melody of Lover’s beautiful ballad, “True Love can ne’er Forget.” The touching associations connected with this lay—founded as it is on Carolan’s romantic passion for Bridget Cruise—the love-breathing notes—the quiet beauty of “the stilly night,” and the visions starting into life at every note, all conspired to fill Bertha’s heart with the sweetest and tenderest emotions, and to strike a gush of feeling from the inmost recesses of her being. She felt happy, she knew not why, for the memories evoked were more of sorrow than of joy. She felt that it was no stranger whose music could thus set her heart throbbing, and she wished above all things to get a sight of him without being herself seen.

Slowly and softly she opened the shutter just

sufficient to enable her to glance through; the green blinds were closed outside so that she had no difficulty in taking observations unseen by any one without, but the music had ceased and nothing that had life met her eyes—nothing but the moonlight sky and the sleeping earth and the spectral branches of the tall linden, stiff and stark as the skeleton of some huge Titan of the elder world.

The musician was nowhere to be seen; but how could he have disappeared so suddenly? Was it, then, a dream, Bertha asked herself, and her heart grew cold within her as the deep hush of midnight settled down unbroken by any sound.

"It *was*, then, a dream," she murmured sadly to herself as she closed the shutters and slowly paced the corridor leading to her own chamber; "and yet how *could* it be? Am I not awake? No! it could not have been an illusion of the senses—I will rather believe it some spirit of the air sent to cheer my weary heart with strains suggestive of happiness!—happiness!" she repeated, as she entered her sleeping apartment and carefully closed the door, "oh! such happiness is not for me; why should I suffer my fancy to run away with my reason?—*my* happiness is henceforward to consist in making my mother, my dear mother, happy, and doing the will of God. Away, then, with idle dreams—elves, or spirits, or whatever you may be that played me such a trick, I defy your malice—ye cheat me not again!" Still she murmured softly to herself:

“ And when all of this life is gone—
Ev’n the hope, lingering now,
Like the last of the leaves left on
Autumn’s sere and faded bough—
’Twill seem as still those friends were near,
Who loved me in youth’s early day,
If in that parting hour I hear
The same sweet notes, and die away—
To that song of the olden time,
Breath’d—like Hope’s farewell strain—
To say, in some brighter clime,
Life and youth will shine again !”*

We know not whether Bertha’s sleep was visited that night by visions of that “brighter clime,” or whether “tir’d nature’s sweet restorer” came at all to soothe her chafed and jaded mind, but certain it is that when she entered her mother’s room next morning she looked like one who had enjoyed a good night’s rest, her step had the buoyancy and her eyes the brightness of earlier days.

Her mother noticed the change and said : “I am glad to see you looking so well this morning, my dear Bertha ! I think you, too, must have heard the serenade that gave my old heart so much pleasure. Or did I but dream that I heard some one playing such delicious old melodies on the flute ?”

“If you *were* dreaming, mother, then I was dreaming, too,” said Bertha turning away to arrange her mother’s toilet. “I heard the music of which you speak.”

“Then you heard ‘Lochaber’ and ‘I’d Mourn

* Moore’s *Ballads and Songs*, &c.

the Hopes that Leave Me,' and—what was the other? if I knew it at the time I do not remember what it was, though I have an idea that it sounded familiar."

"You must have been in that blissful state between sleeping and waking when music falls like a spell on the senses," said Bertha evading the question. "The first time I heard *The Flowers o' the Forest* it was at the dead of night when the moonbeams were sleeping on Avon Dhu's stream beneath the castle walls through a casement of which I was looking forth with my cousin Eveleen—we were spending a summer with Lady Ellersly at —— Castle and had lingered by the window enjoying the beauty of earth and sky and water—you know the inexpressible pathos of that old air, the plaint of the bereaved Scottish maidens for the chivalry of their land swept away on the bloody field of Flodden—you may imagine, then, how deeply it sank into my heart when it came to my ear for the first time over the still waters of that lovely river at an hour when all the world is, or is supposed to be, 'sleeping'—oh! those were sounds never, never to be forgotten, and I have loved the air ever since for I never hear it without feeling again the charm of that moment."

"Was it a flute played it then?" asked her mother.

"No, it was a clarionet—more effective, you know on the water."

All this time the business in hands had been progressing, and Bertha had, as she intended, diverted her mother's thoughts into a somewhat different channel. She took care that the subject of the nocturnal music did not again come on the *tapis*, till the toilet being completed, both ladies repaired to the oratory to perform their morning devotions—they were at too great a distance from any Church to have the privilege of hearing Mass on week-days.

Breakfast was over, and the old lady, seated in her arm-chair near the fire in the sitting-room or parlor where we first introduced her to the reader, was occupied with a volume of Baron Henrion's *Missions Catholiques*, whilst Bertha sat sewing at some distance. The door opened and Jan made his appearance. He stood still, and Bertha raising her eyes asked him what he wanted. He held up something white that appeared to be a handkerchief.

Unwilling to have her mother disturbed, Bertha hastened to take the handkerchief, supposing it one of her own or her mother's. A glance convinced her that it belonged to neither, and she looked inquiringly at Jan.

He was beginning with "I found it, Miss Bertha!——" when the young lady, having glanced at certain initials marked on a corner of the fine cambric handkerchief, quietly put it in her pocket and motioned for Jan to leave the room, which he did, wondering much that Miss Von Wiegel should so far honor a strange handkerchief which he had

found near the avenue-gate. He would have wondered more at Bertha's coolness had he known all; but Jan's discernment was not of the sharpest, as the reader may probably have discovered, and he did not even notice the visible tremor of her hand, or the eagerness with which she snatched the handkerchief and placed it out of sight.

When he told Betty of what had happened, her woman's wit was not slow in detecting something out of the common range of occurrences, trifling as the incident was; but she had sense enough to know that people in their condition must not always tell what they see or what they suspect, so she told Jan to say nothing about the handkerchief to the old madam; she supposed it belonged to Mr. De Witt or some of the other gentlemen, and that Miss Bertha would know by the letters whose it was, and give it to the owner herself.

"I tink you're one great big fool, Betty!" said the polite husband; "Mr. De Witt was not here yesh-terday, or oder gentlemans no more——"

"Maybe it blew in, then, off the road," suggested Betty, sadly at a loss.

"How could it blow, when dere was not de least little bit of wind all day long?"

"Wind or no wind, I tell you it came from outside," said Betty in a tone that admitted no more discussion; "all *you* have to do is to say nothing about it to the old madam."

"Der deyvil! you take me for a fool like your-

self? as if anybody ever goes for to tell *her* about such small little tings!"

The door-bell rang, and Jan hurried off to answer the peremptory summons. He ushered into the parlor a stout, elderly gentleman, and a pale but very pretty young lady.

Their appearance seemed to give pleasure to those within, and Bertha came forward smiling, with both hands outstretched, which the gentleman was not slow to take. He then proceeded to shake hands with Madam Von Wiegel who seemed equally glad to see him. The pale girl, his daughter, brightened up as Bertha kissed her cheek and led her to her mother.

"And so you've got back again to us, Mr. Murray!" said Bertha sitting down by her young friend on a sofa, "and dear Alice too, looking so very much better!"

"Do you really think so?" questioned the anxious father fixing his eyes on his daughter's face, over which a delicate bloom was diffused, partly by the reddish brown shade of the curtains, partly by the pleasure of what was to her, too, a joyful meeting. "Well! I declare she *is* looking better, thank God for it!" Then with an increased vivacity he went on "Back! to be sure I've got back, and little Alice has got back, and somebody else has got back, too!—ha! ha! Miss Bertha! that brings the blood to your cheek—does it not, madam?" addressing the old

lady who sat looking and listening with a pleased smile on her aged features.

"Pray don't say yes, mother! whatever you may *think*!" said Bertha with a merry laugh; "if you do I shall never hear the end of it! But why didn't your *somebody* come with you?"

There it is you see, Madam Von Wiegel!" said the light-hearted old gentleman, his face brimful of good humor; "you see she don't care a rush for Alice or me so long as Robert didn't come to report himself in person!"

"You do yourself and Alice great injustice," said Bertha somewhat more seriously, "and me, too,—I am always glad to see you both, though I do not deny but I should have liked to see Robert, too——"

"Well that's frank and honest, now!" said Mr. Murray taking out his snuff-box, and after tapping it smartly on the lid, handing it to the old lady who took a pinch and bowed her acknowledgment.

"Why not?" asked Bertha; "I hope it is no harm to confess that I feel almost the same sisterly affection for Robert as I do for my dear Alice?"

"Sisterly, eh?" said the old gentleman fixing his eye on her with a most humorous expression of scrutiny. "Well! well! never mind—sisterly or brotherly or what you will, settle it between you when you meet—and that will be——"

"How soon?" asked Bertha, exchanging a smile with Alice.

"Oh! some day before midsummer!—ha! ha! ha! That's good, isn't it?"

"I'll have nothing more to say to you, sir!" said Bertha, "so you will please turn your attention elsewhere. My mother has little reason to be obliged to you for neglecting her so long and *I* want to talk to Alice."

So saying she took her young friend's hand and led her to a distant window where they placed themselves on a cushioned seat within the deep recess.

Bertha had much to ask and Alice much to tell of the sunny skies and magnolia groves and perfumed breezes of the South, for her father had taken her to Cuba to spend the winter-months, fearing the effect of northern frosts on her delicate frame, already weakened by disease. She spoke with enthusiasm of the gay and graceful hospitality of the Cuban Spaniards and the friendships she had formed, and the pleasant acquaintances she had made during her four months' stay in the neighborhood of Havana.

"But see how I run on, my dear Miss Von Wiegel——!"

"Bertha! if you please, *Miss Murray*! I shall not vote for another Cuban visit if this one is to have the effect of *formalizing* my little Alice!"

"Pray excuse me!" said Alice with a look of sincere affection in her mild blue eyes as she met the reproachful glance of Bertha, "I had forgotten your kind permission——"

"Permission!" said Bertha laughing, "why it is

worse and worse you are growing. But, never mind, we shall soon be all right again—what were you going to say to Miss Von Wiegel, when *I* interrupted you?”

“Will you forgive me if I say it?” Bertha nodded and smiled. “Well! I thought—that is I fancied—that something must have occurred since I left to ruffle the calm surface of my dear Bertha’s mind?”

Bertha started—her face was scarlet in a moment—she bit her lip till it was colorless, then smiled, but her smile was not natural, and the gentle Alice, seeing the effect of her question, was sorry she had asked it. But Bertha was calm again in a moment, and, tapping Alice playfully on the cheek, asked in a low voice what grounds she had for such an out-of-the-way idea.

“I can hardly tell you that,” said Alice, casting her eyes down as if to avoid looking in Bertha’s face, “but it seems to me—perhaps it is only fancy—that there is a sort of artificial gaiety put on—as if to hide something—in short, I find your manner very different from its usual calmness—and—and——”

“Come, out with it!—you mean to say *hauteur*—*Nest-ce pas, ma chere?*”

“Not exactly that——”

“But something very like it—well! be it so—but this change—is it for the better or worse?—am I more or less loveable?—more or less like the Bertha you would wish to see me?”

Alice raised her eyes and fixed them on Bertha's face for a moment, then dropping them again she shook her head and sighed.

"So you won't tell me what you think?" said Bertha with that assumed gaiety which rung so hollow on the ear of her friend; "well! I can only say that your ladyship's imagination is running away with you since your visit to the South. *Allons donc!* I see your father is on the move. *Courage, ma belle amie!* there's no change in Bertha's heart."

Alice smiled her thanks, and they hastened to rejoin the old lady and gentleman.

"Well! young ladies, I hope you feel better after your *tete-a-tete*?" said Mr. Murray standing up.

"Very much better, thank you! How is it with you and my mother?"

"We're as merry as crickets—do you want to know what we've been talking about?"

"I'm not at all curious," said Bertha with a smile, "but I know who *is*," she added dropping her voice to reach only Alice's ear.

"You're a disrespectful young—ahem!—young lady! but never mind, you'll meet your match some of these days—won't she, Madam Von Wiegel?"

The old lady smiled and said, "I hope so, Mr. Murray!" and then the visitors took their leave, promising to dine at Rheinfeldt House on the following Sunday.

Leaving the mother and daughter to talk over the agreeable surprise they had received, and the

favorable effect of the mild southern winter on Alice's health, we will take the liberty of making our readers somewhat better acquainted with those new friends of ours, whom I hope to make *theirs*.

The family at present consisted of Randal Murray, the hearty old gentleman already introduced to the reader, Robert, his son, a fine spirited young fellow some years over twenty, and our pretty gentle Alice, who was the delight and solace of her father's heart as Robert was its pride.

The old gentleman had emigrated to America with his young and blooming bride when he himself was in the hey-day of youth, more than a quarter of a century before. He had been brought up to the mercantile business in Dublin, where he had served his time in a wholesale and retail grocery in Thomas street. Active and energetic, and persevering withal, Randal Murray, with the advantages of a plain solid education, had worked his way upwards, esteemed as a man, respected as a trader, and finally, honored as a great man on Change. Unfortunately, his loving and beloved Mary did not live to share his prosperity; the clouds that darken usually around the first years of the emigrant in a strange land threw a blighting shade on the timid girl who had left her father's comfortable homestead on the plains of Kildare "to tempt the dangerous main" and the trials and vicissitudes of an emigrant's life beyond seas with Randal. Consumption was not slow in setting its seal on her so lately

blooming cheek. She died, leaving Alice but two years old, and Robert some six or seven. This was a severe blow to Randal Murray, but he was not the man to give way under misfortune, so he shook off the heavy load of grief—at least externally—secured a staid and sober matron to take charge of his house and give the children the first rudiments of education, then went on with his business with the best heart he could. Ten or twelve years of assiduous application had raised him to the rank of an eminent merchant, as before indicated; his son, after graduating with honor at the only Catholic College which the State of New York could then boast, chose the profession of arms, and entered at West Point. Unwilling as he was to part with Alice for any length of time, Mr. Murray had been induced by some friends in the South to send her to Maryland to be educated by the Sisters of Charity, at Emmettsburg. Under their maternal care and judicious training Alice Murray had grown up to womanhood, and returned to her father after seven years of absence, as “pure and gentle-hearted” and, withal, as well skilled in all womanly accomplishments as even his doating heart could wish.

Strange to say it was at Emmettsburg the Murrays and Von Wiegels had first become acquainted, when only a few months before the Ritter’s death, the latter family had made a tour through the Southern States in accordance with the advice of the old gentleman’s physician. In the parlor of the Con-

vent, when they visited that venerable institution, the Von Wiegels were introduced to Mr. Randal Murray as "a gentleman from New York," and also to his amiable daughter, then a boarder in the Convent, and looking inexpressibly lovely in the tasteful summer-costume of the school.

An acquaintance so auspiciously formed soon ripened into friendship, the tastes and habits of both families being much alike, and their sentiments congenial enough to bind them to each other. Mr. Murray had retired from business a little before Alice came home from school, and had purchased a handsome but unostentatious cottage within ten minutes' walk of Rheinfeldt House. So now having introduced the Murrays and further commended them to the kind attention of our readers, we leave them for the present.



CHAPTER VIII.

AN EPOCH IN THE GALLAGHER ANNALS.

MR. and MRS. SAMUEL C. FOGARTY sought and soon found an eligible residence far enough up town to be at least on the outskirts of the fashionable world—within the Celestial Empire of fashiondom—and safe from the incursions of “outside barbarians” abiding in that vulgar region “down town.” Having consoled our readers with this comfortable assurance we shall leave the young couple to the “delightful task” of furnishing, and otherwise decorating their domicile in Tenth street, and return to see how the world has been using Mrs. Gallagher and her five remaining daughters since we last enjoyed their amiable society.

“The bridal is over, the guests are all gone,” the wedding tour has been completed, the reception, with its attendant ball and supper, are numbered with the past, and the Gallaghers, minus Eliza, have settled down again into the dull routine of daily life. But life is never at a stand-still with the Gallaghers; they are always in pursuit of some brilliant phantom to which distance lends enchantment. The special object of present pursuit will be best understood by the conversation in which the family were engaged on the Saturday night when

we take the liberty of introducing the reader to their front basement at the unseasonable hour of eleven, when they were all assembled round the cheerful blaze.

Tom was in high spirits. He had only got home from the market a little before; butchers' stalls being kept open later on Saturday night in New York as elsewhere; he was in high spirits, as I said, because his receipts that day had been unusually large, so that even Atty Garrell had been moved to exuberant mirth while master and man counted the proceeds of the day's business before they left the market. Tom, therefore, was decidedly "jolly," and none the less so, it may be presumed, for the tumbler of punch, possessing all the qualities attributed to "ladies' punch," being "sweet, strong and warm," as Tom himself averred with an approving smack of the lips, and a corresponding shake of the head. Between his good luck and his good supper, and his good glass of "toddy," Tom Gallagher, then, was decidedly in good humor, of which agreeable fact his observant spouse and her five able assistants were not slow to take advantage.

"Dear me, girls!" said Mrs. Gallagher, and she fetched a heavy sigh, "how lonesome we are since Eliza went away from us!"

Of course the girls assented with five sighs duly responsive.

"Maybe you don't go out enough," observed

Tom good-naturedly ; "I'm afraid you keep the house too close, all of you."

"Well! I don't know but we do, Tom!" with a thoughtful look into the recesses of the fire ; "these poor girls are so busy most of the day that they hardly ever go out at all"—the good woman forgot the little promenade which the "poor girls" managed to take every fine afternoon on the sunny side of Broadway, to the great bewilderment, doubtless, of the excruciatingly-fine young gentleman whose business it is to keep sentry on that beat during the hours of fine afternoons when fashionable young ladies are on exhibition.

"They hardly ever go out, at all," said Mrs. Gallagher compassionately, "for, you know, the weather is *so* changeable that we can hardly count on two fine days running, and when a fine day *does* come, maybe it's just the day they can't get out, poor things!"

Tom hardly knew what consolation to offer, but he ventured at last to suggest that when the weather wasn't good for walking they might go for a ride in the cars or the stages, or out for a sail to Staten Island, or Williamsburgh, or Hunter's Point, or some place else—they had plenty of choices, and needn't stay one day in the house—"if they felt like going out."

"But then, pa," said Fanny, now the senior Miss Gallagher, "it a'nt the thing, you know, for young girls like us to be riding in cars or stages, unless

we have somebody with us—it a'n't proper, you know, and besides, it's *so* vulgar—my! I'd rather walk, any day of the year, than be packed in a car or omnibus with all sorts of people. You have no idea what common, rowdy-looking characters one sees in those conveyances!"

"Haven't I indeed?" said Tom with his good-natured laugh; "why don't you think I have eyes as well as you? *I* can ride in the cars very well."

"Oh! of course you can, pa! but then, you know, you're not like us—young girls are more exposed to insult——"

"Young girls!" repeated the father with a gleeful chuckle; "well! I think, Fanny! *you* ought to be old enough to take care of yourself. Let me see, Ellen! how old is Fanny now?"

"Never mind, pa! how old I am," said Fanny with rising ill-humor; she was going to add, "I'm old enough to be wiser than my father," but a glance from her mother made her rein in her saucy tongue, and she forced herself to look as though she were mightily amused by his little *jeu d'esprit*, pointless though it was.

"I know one thing about the cars and the stages," said Mrs. Gallagher with emphasis, "and that is, that one never feels safe in them."

"Why, bless my soul! Ellen," said her husband, "sure *you're* not a young girl, anyhow? is it afeard of being run away with you are?"

"If *I*'m not run away with, my purse may, or my watch and chain!"

"Pooh, nonsense, woman!"

"I tell you it's no nonsense, Tom Gallagher! didn't I lose my purse once in the Bloomingdale stage and a ten-dollar gold piece in it, besides some small change?"

"And didn't *I* lose a five-dollar pocket-handkerchief in the Third Avenue cars?" said Fanny.

"And didn't *I* lose in the Bleecker street stage that beautiful ring with five small pearls and a spark of diamond that pa gave me for a New Year's present?" chimed in Ellie.

"Lord save us!" said Tom to himself, "what can all this mean, or are they all taking leave of their senses?" Aloud he said: "Well! I own there's very bad walking at times here in New York, so that you can't very well take exercise in the open air, and then you all agree that for one reason or another it isn't safe to go in the cars or stages—now what's to be done?"

"Dear knows!" sighed Mrs. Gallagher, as she proceeded to lock up the closets and make other preliminary motions of a similar kind for the household's approaching departure to the land vulgarly called "of Nod!" "dear knows, Tom! but *I* know *I* can't stand this constant confinement much longer—it's worse on me than the hard work a hundred times!"

"Why! that's true enough, Ellen dear;" said

Tom in perfect good faith, "but what on earth can we do more than we're doing? Supposin' you were to keep another girl—or two, if you think well of it—how would that be?"

Mrs. Gallagher shook her head despondingly.

"Well! let me see—it's March now—we'll soon have the fine weather—what would you think of takin' a tower yourself an' Mag and Annie and Janie, as Fanny and Ellie were away with Eliza?"

"How you do talk, Tom;" cried Mrs. Gallagher very tartly. "How could we go on a tower without any man-body with us to see to the trunks and things?"

"I should think it wouldn't be easy for so many woman-bodies to go on a *tower*, without man-bodies to help them up," whispered Mag to Ellie somewhat irreverently.

"Hush! hush!" whispered Ellie back again; "the fat will be all in the fire if they hear you making fun of them!"

"Well! then, I declare I can't think what's best to do," said Tom, beginning to be really puzzled. "How would a trip to Saratoga do?"

"Very well while it lasted, but that wouldn't be long, and we'd soon be as bad as ever. To tell you the honest truth, Tom dear; and I didn't like to tell you till I see there's nothing else for it—I'm getting mighty bad entirely with pains in my legs!"

"Pains in your legs, Ellen!" cried Tom all aghast; "is it in earnest you are?"

"In earnest!" repeated his spouse in a tone of reproach; "do you think it's joking I'd be about the like of that?"

"But it's curious you never told me before—how long are you troubled with the pains—maybe it's the rheumatics you're getting?"

"Whatever it is, I find my limbs failin' me, and that's what doesn't answer *me* of all people that has so much to do around the house."

"By the laws, it's a bad business," said Tom, musingly; "we must see the doctor about it."

"You'll do no such thing," said Mrs. Gallagher quickly; it's time enough to be laying out money with doctors when we can't help it. I tell you, it's air I want, fresh country air, and that regularly."

"Oh, if that's all you want," said Tom, with a lightened heart, "we can manage that easy enough. Hire a carriage a couple of times a week, or every day if you like, and take some of the girls out with you for a ride."

"A drive, pa," suggested Fanny.

"Well, whatsomever you call it—a ride or a drive."

"And all the money we'd pay for coach-hire would be a dead loss!" said Mrs. Gallagher economically. "No, Tom! we'll do no such foolish thing, with *my* consent, anyhow! If we do spend money on account of these legs of mine—weary on them for legs!—let us have something for it!—you know you have to keep a couple of horses now for your

business—well! *let us buy a carriage at once*, instead of hiring one two or three times a week—then *we'll have it of our own, you know*, and can drive out whenever we've a mind to, without shoveling out money to them hackmen that wouldn't thank us for all we'd give them."

Having so delivered herself, Mrs. Gallagher looked as though she expected a compliment for her money-saving ingenuity. All the girls immediately chorused in, quite innocently, the darlings! and with such glad surprise as though they had never thought, never heard of such a thing before.

"Oh yes, pa!—let us have a carriage—won't you, pa?—now do, pa!—it will be *so nice, you know!*"

"Yes, yes," said poor beleaguered Tom Gallagher; "yes, yes, I know it would be very nice and very pleasant, but I know, too, that it would cost a nice penny to get such a carriage as *you'd* like to ride out in."

"Why, no, Tom! it wouldn't cost so much as you think," said his wife; "a very plain one would do, you know!" and she winked at the girls.

"A plain one, eh?—well! if I thought that—I wonder, now, how much it would cost—if a couple of hundred dollars would do, I wouldn't mind goin' as far as that on one."

"Well! it wouldn't be much over that, at any rate," observed Mrs. Gallagher, "and then havin' the horses, as I said before——"

"Yes, but you could only have *them* on Sundays, you know!"

"Oh! well, that'll do"—another wink at the girls—"it's on Sunday we want the carriage most when you can be with us yourself, Tom!"

"Well! but see here, Ellen!" said Tom looking very shrewd, "there's another thing we are forgettin' entirely."

"An' what is that, Tom dear?"

"Why, if we get a carriage we'll have to keep a man to drive it, I suppose?"

"An' what of that?" asked his wife, ever fruitful in expedients; "don't we want a man badly to do turns about the house, and take care of the grass-plot abroad?"

"And then he'd do for a waiter when we have company, pa!" suggested Fanny.

"Yes," said the mother, "we could advertise for a coachman and butler."

"Nonsense, ma!" retorted Fanny, "sure nobody advertises for a coachman and butler!"

"I tell you they do," persisted the mother; "didn't I see it in the *Herald* a score of times?"

"You had better eyes than I have, then, for I never saw it! you might have seen 'coachman and gardener wanted.'"

"Coachman and *butler*, I say!" Fanny shook her head incredulously.

The dispute was likely to wax warm when the

father of the family put a stop to further altercation by saying :

“ Well ! well ! the coachman can be seen about after—better get the coach first !”

“ Then we may have it ?” “ Oh ! you dear, darling pa !” “ My ! I’m so glad !” cried the girls one after the other, and gathering around poor Tom like a swarm of bees they began to caress him each in their own way, the mother laughing gleefully at the joyfully-exciting scene.

“ I don’t believe there ever *was* so dear a pa !” ejaculated Fanny by way of winding up.

“ Well ! I’ll tell you what, girls !” said Mrs. Gallagher, “ we musn’t impose on good nature, so you musn’t think of that box at the opera—this season at least.”

“ Box at the opera !” cried Tom opening his large round eyes to their fullest extent ; “ why what the mischief will come into your heads next ?—I never heard a word of the box at the opera—I’ll be blowed if I stand *that* !” and he stood up and lifted his chair, and set it down again with great vehemence.

“ Not *this* year, Tom dear !” said his wife soothingly.

“ No, nor next year either ! it’ll be a month of Sundays before you get that length, anyhow !” And so saying, Tom marched out of the room, having previously thrown his coat back on his shoul-

ders by a violent jerk expressive of indomitable resolution.

"Oh ma! you've spoiled all!" said Fanny with decided temper; "what evil spirit put it in your head to say anything about the box at the opera?"

"It's all over now—we'll never get the carriage!" whimpered Ellie, and the three junior Miss Gallaghers began to sob audibly.

"Nonsense, girls!" said the mother cheerily, "don't be making fools of yourselves! I tell you we'll have the carriage, and a handsomer one than Mrs. McGilligan's, and a pair of carriage-horses, and a livery-servant—ay! and the box at the opera, too!—d'ye mind now?"

Of course the girls did mind, and would mind, and were delighted to mind so ecstatically-dear a parent.

"Well! but listen to what I'm a-going to tell you!" Never were five hearers more attentive. "If you want to have all this and more just let me manage it all my own way!—if *you* be putting in your tongues, without a sign from *me*, you'll put your foot in it, mind I tell you!"

No! no! there was not the slightest danger of any such pedal movement—the girls were too much overjoyed to put either tongue or foot in any plan emanating from their ma's busy brain, and what a little busy bee of a brain that was, to be sure!

It was altogether remarkable what ease and agility Mrs. Gallagher displayed in the "gettin' up stairs"

that night, considering the "weary legs" she had, and the failing state of her limbs generally. The discrepancy did not escape the keen eyes of the girls, and they laughed merrily as they saw her lead the way in the ascent, with as light a step as any of them. She silenced their mirth, however, by turning and shaking her fist at them, for they were now within an unsafe distance of their father, who, if he chanced to hear them laughing so heartily, might peradventure "smell a rat," and, so smelling, begin to reconsider his promise in relation to the carriage.

For the next three or four weeks nothing was thought of by Mrs. Gallagher and her daughters but the all-important affair of the forthcoming equipage. Eliza was summoned to the family council, and her heart expanded with joy, as in duty bound, at the approaching aggrandizement of her relatives. It might be that she counted on the use of the carriage for herself to a certain extent, and that visions of state-airings on the Bloomingdale road, with a pair of handsome bays or grays before her and the luxurious cushions of a stylish barouche behind and beneath her, might have been floating through her mind, but what if they did, wasn't Eliza still part of the Gallagher family, and a very important part, too, all the more so for being Mrs. Samuel C. Fogarty. It was decided on, however, at the first general council, held in the front basement of No. 66, that the whole affair was to be kept a profound secret from the Fogartys and every one else, until

everything was ready for the grand turn-out, which was appointed for "Sunday three-weeks," counting from the day of the consultation.

The first week was spent by our six ladies in visiting, two by two, the different carriage-factories, inspecting colors and material of cushions, style of trimming, &c., comparing what they saw with the equipages of Mrs. McGilligan aforesaid, and half a dozen other Mistresses of their acquaintance, all of whom were to be thrown into the shade—in fact annihilated—by the splendor and fashion of the Gallagher *cortege*. On the Friday of that week, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the carriage was purchased—a very elegant family-coach, with a box in front, of course, and a stand behind, also in course, for "the tiger"—that was one day to grace the Gallagher menagerie. The carriage was represented to Tom as a dead bargain, seeing that it only cost *seven hundred dollars*, and it would be worth that to them—ay! and a hundred dollars more—any day they wished to part with it. Indeed they'd never have got it for anything like what they *did*, only it so happened that the same hard necessity that wrung the poison from the reluctant apothecary of dramatic story coerced the worthy vender of carriages at that particular juncture;—in other words that gentleman was badly in want of ready money, so said Mrs. Gallagher to Mr. Gallagher—which fact alone could account for *their* good luck in obtaining such a beautiful, elegant carriage for a mere song!

Tom was forced to give in, although the good luck in question was not so clear to his perception as it was to his wife's—still he did give in, and handed out the money with the best grace he could.

The horses were the next "consideration." The procuring of them was not so difficult a matter as might be supposed. "No one in their senses would ever dream of putting common cart-horses before" so splendid a conveyance as the coach-maker's necessity had thrown into the hands of the Gallaghers, so Tom, the head of that house, *being* in his senses, did *not* dream of any such incongruous proceeding, especially as real good luck had come to him the week previous in the shape of a large contract. So the horses were bought, "two loves of iron-grays," (as the delighted Miss Gallaghers phrased it,) with harness of a style and fashion to correspond with the other items of the "turn-out."

Atty Garrell, contrary to all expectation, entered with spirit into the "coach-and-two" affair, so glorious to the house of Gallagher and its dependencies; in fact Atty was quite elate at the prospect of having it to say, and above all to write to Ireland, that Tom Gallagher, who came from the next townland to him at home, was riding in his coach. Atty was opposed to laying out money on superfluities, under which head he was wont to class dress in all its branches—albeit, that he had, in the privacy of his own little room in a cheap boarding-house not far from the market, written boastfully to

his people at home that Mrs. Gallagher and her daughters were "rolling in their silks," and, furthermore, that the sum total of the money expended on those silks wherein they rolled would stock a fine farm. On such confidential occasions, honest Atty used to wind up with the emphatic interrogatory "Isn't it the fine country all out?" generally adding, "I think Tom Gallagher would be a long time at home in Kilternan before he'd come to the likes of that."

So sincere was Atty's coalescence in the measure "before the house," that he volunteered his services to hunt up a fitting charioteer to encase in the blue livery-overcoat already provided, and after some days of anxious search (at least all the spare time he had) Atty's laudable perseverance was crowned with success, and he had the honor and pleasure of introducing to the assembled family, on the Sunday preceding the great day, "a smart, decent boy—Peter Malowney by name—from within a stone's throw of where he (Atty) was brought up." Peter was not "green"—he was a true blue, if such orthodox color may lawfully distinguish a coachman; he had seen good service—that is to say, driven carriages for some of the first in the city, and was, moreover, not altogether unwilling to "take charge of a pantry," together with a grass-plot.

This was all very satisfactory, so far as it went, but there were some other little arrangements still to be made before the affair was finally settled.

There was no coach-house on the premises, and pending the erection of one, for which there was, luckily, ample space, the carriage was to be kept at a neighboring livery-stable, together with the two "loves of iron-grays," for whose reception the stable hitherto occupied by the cart-horses was to undergo a thorough fitting-up, the useful but unfashionable animals last mentioned to be sent "down town" to a livery-stable of less pretensions in the vicinity of the market.

All these various arrangements being completed to the entire satisfaction of those most concerned, just three days before the intended demonstration, the ladies feeling quite exhausted after their arduous and unremitting exertions for almost three weeks, resolved to rest lightly on their oars—now that all was fairly under weigh—and refresh their jaded minds and flagging spirits by a few visits to particular friends where they might reasonably hope to get "posted up" in the gossip of the neighborhood, and find out what had been going on whilst they were horse-and-carriage hunting.

On the Thursday before the so anxiously-expected Sunday, Mrs. Gallagher and her three youngest daughters went to spend the afternoon, and possibly the evening, at "Eliza's," and the two elder were to go in, after tea, to see how the Fogartys "were getting on," with a special charge from their mother to try and find out whether they (the Fogartys) "had got any inkling about the carriage."

These arrangements for the day being duly discussed at the early breakfast of the family, Tom asked his wife carelessly what time she thought she'd be home.

Mrs. Gallagher didn't know for certain. Why did he ask? Oh! for no reason in the world, Tom said, only the house would be so lonesome without her—he hoped she'd try and be home before him, at any rate.

“My goodness, Tom Gallagher!” said his wife laughing, “what on earth would you do if I was like other women that go out visiting, or walking, or riding, every day of their lives? I've given you a bad fashion, my good man! so I must try and break you off of it—I don't think you'll see a sight of us here the night before ten o'clock. D'ye hear that now?”

Of course Tom did hear, and acquiesced with a nod and a quiet smile. Tom was a man of few words, generally speaking, and at home he found it the easiest thing in the world to avoid “much speaking,” his “womankind” being able and willing to do all the talking themselves.

Tom was home to tea that evening in good time, and with him was Atty Garrell “drest up to the nines,” as Fanny and Ellie said, but, of course, that was to be expected when pa brought him home to tea.

Tea being over, the two young ladies throwing shawls around them, and on their heads rigolettes,

betook them to Mrs. Fogarty's, next stone house above. We shall stay no longer with them there than just to mention that by various skilful manœuvres of a searching, yet non-committing character, they succeeded in ascertaining that the Fogartys, old and young, were in a state of ignorance concerning the forthcoming "equipage," which ignorance, if it were not bliss to the Fogartys, was decidedly bliss to the Miss Gallaghers.

When the Gallagher mansion was vacated by the last of the feminine members of the family, strange movements were perceptible on the part of the proprietor. Immediately he and Atty were both on the alert, and the latter functionary was dispatched on an errand, the nature of which could hardly be ascertained from the quick, tremulous manner and the half-whisper in which the order was given. Left alone, Tom was not idle; he ascended with unwonted agility to some upper region of his domicile, and in a few minutes appeared "as clean as a new pin," to borrow his own expressive metaphor. He had hardly returned to the sitting-room when carriage-wheels were heard approaching—then stopping at the door. Tom rushed out—there was the new carriage, "loves of iron-grays," and all;—Peter was on the box, minus the livery-coat, however—and beside him was Atty Garrell, whose small bulk sprang with much velocity to the ground.

Tom laughed, and Atty laughed, and Peter on his perch laughed, too, as Tom stepped in, having

first carefully wiped his feet on the mat in the vestibule, and warned Atty to do likewise, which he did.

“Jump in, then,” said Tom, “we’ll have the first of the new carriage, Atty, and a glorious night it is, too, for a ride. Isn’t it lucky the ground’s so dry, or we couldn’t venture out—but now mind, Peter, you’re to look all over the coach when you have the daylight to-morrow, and clean off any specks that you’ll see on it!”

“Oh! leave that to me, sir!” said Peter; “begorra, I wouldn’t have a spot on it for my month’s wages when the mistress, God bless her! comes to clap her eye on it!”

“And you’ll never say a word about the ride we’re goin’ to have?”

“Faith! if he does,” put in Atty, who had just put himself into the carriage by the side of his principal, “faith, if he does, it’ll be all the worse for himself as well as others!—well! I declare, Mr. Gallagher! it’s a bold venture, anyhow, and you’re the drollest man that ever lived to think of playing the ladies such a trick!”

“Isn’t it a great idaya?” chuckled Tom. “But, after all, Atty, isn’t it my own? didn’t I shell out for it? and I’d like to know who has a better right to it first or last? And, you see, I wanted *you* to have the first ride in it, for you’re the best friend I have in the world, Atty! and, in course, if I didn’t take you along with myself, the thing wouldn’t be

done, no how ! So drive on, Peter ! as fast as you can, in the name of God !”

“ Where do you wish to go, sir ?”

“ Oh ! then, myself doesn’t much care, Peter ! just drive wherever you like—it’s case equal to us.”

“ All right, sir !” and so saying, Peter flourished his whip and drove off, as much delighted with the practical joke they were playing on the mistress and the young ladies as either Tom or his fac-totum.

Tom Gallagher’s courage deserved success, and success he had in his perilous undertaking, for, over and above the pleasure of the ride—all the greater, of course, for being stolen—he had the great good luck to be “ home again,” as the ballad says, and seated in cushioned and slippered ease at the fire in the sitting-room—the iron-grays and Atty being respectively gone to quarters for the night—when the authoritative ring at the door announced the return of the *chatelaine* and her daughters—at least some of them ; the others made their appearance soon after. Mrs. Gallagher was much surprised to see Tom “ dressed up,” but the change of apparel was satisfactorily explained by the simple announcement that “ himself and Atty were out on a little business.” Fortunately, Mrs. Gallagher’s curiosity was on another scent just then, so instead of questioning Tom as to the nature of the “ little business” aforesaid, she began to inquire of Fanny and Ellie whether the Fogartys had heard of the carriage or not.

CHAPTER IX.

A MORNING AT RHEINFELDT HOUSE.

ABOUT two weeks after the serenade which had so disturbed Bertha, and just when she had partially succeeded in banishing it from her mind, or rather forcing her thoughts into other channels, she went out one bright Spring morning for a walk with Alice Murray, and having left her at her own domicile returned home alone.

"Is that you, Bertha?" said her mother opening the parlor-door, as her daughter entered the hall.

"Yes, mother, it is I—I hope you haven't been wanting me?"

"No, not exactly wanting you, but I am glad you came just now."

"And why so, mother?"

"Because I am expecting some gentlemen here presently to see the house."

"To see the house! for what purpose?—are you going to let or sell it?"

Her mother put a note into her hand; it was written in pencil-mark, and she turned to the window to read as follows:

"Major Montague and Captain Bellew of the British Army present their compliments to Madam Von Wiegel, and would be much obliged if she

would permit them to see certain apartments of her mansion, which, as they are informed, have a historical interest for British officers visiting New York.

“Astor House, Thursday morning.”

“Why, Bertha!” said her mother, “you take longer to read that note than I did. I found no difficulty in deciphering its contents.”

“Who brought the note, mother?” said Bertha still at the window.

“A gentleman’s servant, Jan said.”

“And what answer did you give?”

“Why, *of course*, I sent my compliments that the gentlemen were very welcome to visit any part of the house they might desire to see. I dare say they will soon be here now, as I received the note immediately after you left.”

“Very well, mother! I will be down in a few moments,” and so saying Bertha left the room. Having laid aside her bonnet and shawl she hastened to the oratory, and knelt a moment or two before the little altar—no word escaped her lips, but her heart breathed a fervent prayer, and she bowed her head before the maternal figure of Our Lady, then rose very pale but very calm, and descended to the parlor with a slow but firm step.

She had hardly taken her seat in the recess of one of the front windows when the door-bell rang, and Jan throwing open the parlor-door announced “two gentlemen to see madam.” They had given their

names but Jan's Teutonic tongue found it easier to pass them over.

Madam Von Wiegel arose and so did her daughter to receive the visitors, who, though dressed as civilians, bore about them the marks and manners of military men. One of them was a tall distinguished-looking man about five-and-thirty, whose face, though singularly handsome, was somewhat bronzed by exposure to the sun, and its dark Southern hue was made darker still by a shadow from within that might be pride or melancholy, perhaps both. However it was, it was a face which both attracted and repelled, a face one might love yet fear to look upon, the fear not so much from any sinister expression as a certain degree of sternness that, after all seemed foreign to the fine intellectual features.

The other gentleman was lower in stature and stouter in build, with a frank, cheerful, good-humored countenance, blue laughing eyes, a broad white forehead, large sandy whiskers, and a profusion of auburn hair ; he might have been a year or two older than his companion, but his manner being easier and more careless made him appear the younger of the two.

"Madam Von Wiegel, I presume?" said the taller of the visitors bowing with the ease of a finished gentleman. Madam Von Wiegel bowed assent.

"My name, madam, is Edgar Montague, major in her Britannic Majesty's — regiment of foot."

"And mine, madam!" said his friend rather abruptly, "is Gerald Bellew, captain in the same—both very much at Madam Von Wiegel's service."

The old lady bowed again, this time with a pleased smile, for the frank courtesy of Bellew's manner at once prepossessed her in his favor.

"Pray be seated, gentlemen!" she said loftily, yet kindly. "You wish, it seems, to see some of the apartments of this house?"

"With your permission, madam!" said the captain, to whom she had more particularly addressed herself. "We have been told that this venerable mansion was the residence and head-quarters of Sir William Howe during the British occupation of New York, and that a room in it was sometime occupied by the unfortunate, but ever-regretted Major Andre—is it so, madam?"

"It is, sir, and we shall be happy to comply with your wish to see the room which is, even to us, an object of interest from its association with the memory of a brave and accomplished though unfortunate gentleman. My daughter and I will accompany you, as our major-domo is neither the most intelligent nor intelligible of *ciceroni*. Bertha, my dear! Major Montague and Captain Bellew—my daughter, gentlemen!"

Whether the gentlemen's eyes had or had not been straying towards the graceful occupant of the recess, they had not attempted to address her, and

now when she rose to acknowledge the introduction, they both bowed in silence, even the captain with a sort of restraint that was very different from his previous manner, whilst his more reserved companion scarcely bent his proud head.

A rich glow like that of the setting sun's last beam suffused Bertha's face; it was only for a moment, but that very moment Montague raised his eyes from the stiff, geometrical lines on the Persian carpet, and looked her full in the face. Their eyes met for an instant, but whatever passed, or if anything passed, no particular emotion was visible on either side—both bowed, civilly but rather coldly, as a close observer could not fail to have perceived. It might have been only fancy, though, for coldness and reserve seemed natural to both lady and gentleman.

"Major Andre's room is on the second story," said Madam Von Wiegel, moving towards the door.

"Could not your servant show us the room, madam?" said the Major. "We cannot permit you to take so much trouble in order to gratify the whim of two idle tourists."

"Excuse me, sir! What you call trouble is really a pleasure to us."

"In that case, permit me to offer my arm!"

Strangely enough the old lady had just taken the captain's arm, which that lively gentleman offered with a smile and a bow.

With a comical side-long glance at his friend, the captain moved on with the lady of the mansion on his arm.

Montague looked at Bertha, and was evidently about to offer the rejected arm for her acceptance, but the cold smile that curved her lip brought the red blood to his cheek and he walked on in silence by her side.

In this order they all ascended the broad, easy stairs, and reaching a wide, cheerful corridor lit from a large window on the staircase, Bertha stepped forward and opened a door about midway on one side.

"This, gentlemen, is—or was Major Andre's room. The furniture has undergone little alteration, as you may perceive, since he slept for the last time on yonder couch," pointing to a low, uncurtained bed, very much resembling a camp-bed, which stood with its head to the wall between the two windows that gave light to the room.

She was about to open the window curtains, but Montague's voice arrested her, and she turned involuntarily to look into his face, his tone was so earnest.

"Do not, Miss Von Wiegel! pray do not! Excuse me," he added, with a sudden change of manner, as it were recollecting himself. "I know not how it may be with others, but to my thinking the veiled light through those curtains is more in keeping with the saddening associations of the place."

"I believe you are right, Montague!" said his friend in a subdued tone, even he feeling the sombre influence of the scene.

Bertha quietly withdrew her hand from the curtain and bowed her acquiescence; she sighed, but so low that no one heard her; it was on her lips to say that she never voluntarily admitted a strong light into the room where the melancholy shade of Andre seemed still to hover over every object, but she checked herself and remained silent.

Whilst the captain walked round the room with Madam Von Wiegel still by his side, Major Montague stood in thoughtful mood with his arm resting on the low mantel-piece; Bertha watched him for a moment—it was evident to her, by the expression of his face, that the sad story of poor Andre was not in sole possession of his mind, and a strange smile curved her own lip; all at once he started, looked up, and catching the expression of Bertha's face where she stood at a little distance, he colored, bit his lip, and then smiled, too, with a careless and unembarrassed air.

"I was thinking, Miss Von Wiegel!" said he with perfect composure, "of the *one* who divided poor Andre's heart with his country's cause—I fancy the thought of how keenly *she* would feel his disgrace must have been to him amid all the anticipated horrors of a spy's death, what Shakspeare describes ingratitude—more keen than serpent's tooth. It was something—oh! much—to know that, though

all the world condemned, *she* would never believe him guilty." He added, as if half unconsciously :

" Yes ! weep, and however my foes may condemn
Thy tears shall efface their decree,
For heaven can witness, tho' guilty to them
I have been but too faithful to thee !"

Without looking at Bertha—and she was glad he did not—he walked quickly to the other end of the large square chamber where Madam Von Wiegel was giving his friend some interesting details which tradition had handed down concerning the former tenant of the room, and the stern commander whose tortuous policy proved so fatal to him. •

They next visited the drawing-room which had been the reception-room of Lady Howe ; independent of the associations connected with it, and the brilliant memories the sight of it conjured up, the spacious room was nowise remarkable, except for the elegant simplicity of the furniture, and the taste displayed in its arrangement, the whole having a somewhat more modern aspect than any of the other apartments. The hangings were of blue damask, and the sofas and chairs and ottomans were covered with the same, as was also a divan which occupied the centre of the room. The walls on either side of the large, old-fashioned fireplace were graced with portraits of Madam Von Wiegel and her deceased husband, taken evidently a score of years before, when age had not yet wrinkled the brow or bleached the hair of either. The Ritter

Von Wiegel was represented as a tall and rather slender figure slightly bent, with a finely-shaped head and features of a most prepossessing cast, though marked by the strong peculiarities of his race; the complexion was fair and the eyes light, with a certain solidity of look that approached to heaviness, indicating his Teutonic origin. Still it was a handsome face expressive of good, rather than great qualities, and you felt as you looked on it that the Ritter Von Wiegel was in his lifetime a man who had few or no enemies and many friends.

Opposite was the portrait of Bertha, in a dark-green riding habit, which showed to advantage the beautiful symmetry of her form, whilst the low-crowned hat, with its long ostrich plume shading her brow, completed the grace and majesty of the figure. The dark lustrous eyes beamed down from the canvas with a sweet thoughtfulness in their clear depths, and there was earnestness and self-control impressed on every feature, the light of genius playing over all. It was a beautiful face, and when Madam Von Wiegel stopped before it with her companion he could not repress his admiration.

“By Jove! madam, that is a picture worth looking at!”

The old lady smiled. “As much as to say, captain! that the others were not so!”

“I beg a thousand pardons, madam! I should do injustice to the artistic excellence of the other portraits and also to the original subjects were I to

say or insinuate any such thing. I think I may say without being suspected of flattery, that what the original of *this* picture is, the original of *that* was!" Turning and pointing to the maternal portrait, and bowing at the same time to the really handsome old lady.

"I say Montague!" said the captain, "have you seen this portrait?"

"Yes," said the major carelessly; he was turning over the leaves of a volume of engravings that lay on one of the tables. "Have *you* seen these engravings?—they are copies of Raphael's Madonnas!"

"If you are a lover of the arts, Captain Bellew!" said Bertha, who was arranging the flowers in a vase, "you will find them worthy of attention."

Here the door opened, and a dashing young fellow in the undress uniform of the United States army made his appearance, and in the easiest and most careless way imaginable was walking across the room to Bertha, saying in a gay and lightsome tone: "You must wish me joy, Bertha! I have got my commission, at last!" when perceiving the strangers he drew himself up, and bowed first to Madam Von Wiegel, then to Bertha—very slightly to the gentlemen.

"Good morning, Robert!" said Bertha advancing to shake hands with the young officer; "so you've got your commission! I am very, very glad. I dare say your father and Alice are glad, too,

though, after all, it will deprive us of your society just when we have learned to value it."

"Perhaps not," said her mother; "have you any idea, Robert, where you are to be sent?"

"Not the slightest, madam! but I am willing to go 'wherever duty calls me,' as the old song says—provided I am not forgotten by—my friends!" and he glanced furtively at Bertha.

"*The girls we leave behind us*," said the merry captain, "are apt to stand in the foreground on such occasions. Excuse me, sir! I speak from experience, for I, too, have the honor of being a son of Mars, and my first parting from home and loved ones is not yet forgotten."

The soldierly frankness of Bellew's manner quite disarmed Robert, who had been rather disposed to resent this abrupt speech. He exchanged a polite bow with the captain, and looked at his companion, but seeing no encouragement in his apparently-supercilious silence, and the cold reserve of his manner, Robert eyed him without speaking and turned again to the captain.

"And may I ask, sir! to what service *you* belong?"

"Of course you may—I serve Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, and my name is Bellew—Captain Bellew."

"And my name, Captain Bellew! is Murray—till this morning a Cadet in the Military Academy at West Point—for the last hour Second Lieutenant in the — United States regiment of infantry."

"I wish you joy, sir, of your appointment—ours is a noble profession!" said the captain, and the two officers shook hands.

"But by your name you ought to be Irish," said Robert Murray—"do you belong to the Bellews of Louth of whom I have so often heard?"

"I do, but not exactly to the Bellewstown family."

"I thought you must be Irish," said Robert; "there is no possibility of mistaking an Irish *gentleman*—when we have the good fortune to meet him."

"Well! and what do you suppose my friend here is?" said Bellew laughing and indicating the major by a side-nod.

Murray turned and glanced upwards again at the dark handsome face over which a faint smile was now breaking like the April sun through the wintry clouds that sometimes darken the early spring. Strangely enough he looked at Bertha before he answered, and he colored to the temples when he saw her eyes fixed intently on the face he had been examining.

"Really I cannot say," said Robert turning away rather pettishly. "Whatever the gentleman is, he is not an Irishman—rather a Spanish *hidalgo*, I think—or a Turkish Bey!" he muttered to himself, then saying something in a low voice to Madam Von Wiegel, he nodded to Bertha and Captain Bellew and left the room.

"Is he gone, mother?" said Bertha in surprise; "why I wanted to ask him how Alice's cough is to—

day and whether they went up the river yesterday as they intended." "You can still ask him, then," said her mother, "he is only gone down to the parlor."

"A fine young fellow that!" said Bellew to his friend.

"I cannot say much for his politeness," Montague returned with a smile.

"Pooh! pooh! he's only a boy, you know!"

"If he be, he is a boy of considerable pretensions——"

"That I grant you," the captain rejoined with emphasis.

"Madam Von Wiegel," said the major approaching the old lady, who had seated herself on a sofa, "I fear we are trespassing on your time, and at the same time presuming on your kindness. Permit us to thank you for your polite attention, and the very great pleasure you have afforded us."

"I am happy, Major Montague," said Madam Von Wiegel with her grave courtesy, "that we have been able to contribute even in a slight degree to your entertainment and that of your friend. British officers though you be, unlike my young friend Robert Murray, I can confidently claim you *both* for countrymen. I am not mistaken, am I?"

"Certainly not, madam!" began the major. "If *you* are——"

He stopped short, and hesitated, for he had caught an ironical glance from Bertha, where she stood ar-

ranging the cover on a harp that stood enveloped in green baize in a corner opposite.

"Irish!" repeated Madam Von Wiegel; "need you ask?"

"Certainly not, madam," put in the captain just as the major had said it before; "though your speech does *not* betray you, there is that about you which speaks to us of home. There is a freemasonry, you know, existing between persons from the same country that places them at once on an easy footing. We must not longer trespass on your time, as my right honorable and gallant friend says—(I speak in parliamentary style, you see)—for which reason, madam! we shall now bid you good morning." He made his bow, as did the major, and both turned to look for Bertha, but she had vanished.

"Not so soon, gentlemen," said Madam Von Wiegel standing up; "you will do us the favor of sharing our early lunch before you go?"

The gentlemen looked at each other, and then the captain said, in his blithesome way: "The offer is too tempting, madam, to be on any account rejected."

When Madam Von Wiegel and the two officers descended to the breakfast parlor where she had ordered lunch to be served, they found Bertha and Robert Murray standing before the fireplace in earnest conversation. As they entered, Bertha turned away with what seemed a disturbed air, and Robert threw himself on a seat with a muttered

anathema on something or somebody that had roused his ire—very hot while it lasted, but that was never long.

"Will you not join us, Robert?" said Madam Von Wiegel as she took her seat.

"No, thank you! I have an appointment at one, and it is now after twelve."

"But surely," said Bertha, "you can lunch with us and still keep your appointment. You will not refuse my mother's invitation?"

He looked at her steadily a moment, she smiled and beckoned him over, and he seated himself at the table laughing and saying pleasantly: "It is not often, Captain Bellew, one meets such good company."

"True, my young friend! and, moreover, ladies' commands are law to us soldiers. Permit me to pledge you, lieutenant! in this excellent claret."

"With much pleasure, captain! I drink to our better acquaintance!—may I ask how long you have been in New York?"

"About a week—we have been exploring in the neighborhood, chiefly amongst the historical scenes on the Hudson hereabouts. We have also spent a couple of pleasant days at Sunnyside with the patriarch of American literature."

"Oh! you mean Washington Irving—I have not the pleasure of knowing him personally."

"He is one of the most amiable of men and accomplished of literati," observed the major; "he

reminds me more than any one else of our own Rogers, whose urbanity and benevolence are so justly celebrated."

"Then you know Samuel Rogers?" asked Bertha abstractedly; she was looking very thoughtful just then.

"Yes, I met him at Hampton Court when I went down with some friends to visit the old place. I was just after reading the *Pleasures of Memory*, and was rejoiced to meet its author under such circumstances. It was no ordinary pleasure to have the privilege of supporting the poet's failing steps for an hour or two through the scenes of Wolsey's greatest splendor—where every object bore the impress of his gorgeous taste, and his colossal shadow rested on all."

"It *was* a pleasure," said Bertha, her cheek slightly flushed; "yes memory *has* its pleasures—though all memories are *not* pleasant—however," she added quickly, "Hampton Court is a place of *many* memories—alas! how strangely varied!"

"Well!" said the captain, desirous of giving the conversation a more lively turn, "you may talk as you will about the 'Pleasures of Memory,' but give me the 'Pleasures of Hope.' *A bas* Rogers and *Vive* Campbell, say I!"

"I vote for Campbell, too," said Robert, "but on different grounds. I admire him as the classically-elegant author of the 'Pleasures of Hope,' but I love him as the sweet singer whose deathless lay

has thrown dignity and grace around the sorrows of 'the Exile of Erin.' Scotchman as he was, Thomas Campbell had an Irish heart, and the Irish people and their descendants in every clime owe him a debt of gratitude. He has left us in that immortal ballad a legacy of love, and a pledge of sympathy as warm as ever glowed in a poet's heart."

The young man spoke with unwonted warmth, and, seeing the silent attention with which his words were heard, he was half ashamed, and blushed like a bashful maiden.

Bertha looked her approbation, and her beaming smile encouraged Robert and served to restore his composure.

"Why, Robert," said Madam Von Wiegel kindly, "you have grown eloquent of late. I was not aware that the joys or sorrows of poor distant Ireland—a country which you never saw—could call forth your enthusiasm to such a degree."

"I am sorry, madam, that you should ever have doubted my love for Ireland. True, I never saw it, but the day on which I see it first shall be marked in white on my life's calendar. Why should I *not* love and honor it?—what land on earth has so many claims on the love and honor of its children—and *their* children?"

"Can, then, a man have two countries?" asked the captain in a more serious tone than he had yet spoken in.

"Yes," said Robert promptly and frankly; "I have

two countries :—Ireland, the cradle of my race, the grave of my fathers, the most faithful of Christian nations—America, or rather the United States of America, the land of my birth, the land of home and friends, the freest under the sun. Both are equally dear to my heart, and for either I am willing to shed my blood."

"Bravo, lieutenant!" cried Bellew warmly, "your sentiments do you honor, and, upon *my* honor, you have infused a kindred spirit into me. Of course I do not mean to say that I did not love our old motherland before—that would not be true—but I am not ashamed to own that I have learned a lesson from an American officer, and for the future *I*, too, will have two countries?"

"*Two*, will you?" asked Montague in a significant tone.

"Confound it, no!" was the energetic reply of the mercurial captain; "we, after all, can have but one—we wear the livery of England, and receive her pay—at her behest we will draw our swords, but when it comes to a question of country—*patrie*, you know—why, *we* can have but one—*England can never be to the Irishmen who serve her what Columbia is to her Irishmen*. We are faithful to her cause not from love but from honor."

"Come, come!" said the major with a melancholy smile and a quivering lip, "you forget the presence of your superior officer—I fear I shall be under the necessity of su^bmitting your case to a court-martial."

"It were a good deed," said Bertha pointedly, "to hand him over to British justice for acknowledging the heinous crime of loving his native land. Yes! it were a deed to boast of at the mess-table!"

The captain looked surprised—Robert started up and looking at his watch said he had but a few minutes to get to the place of his appointment, and having shaken hands cordially with the captain and the ladies, bowed to the major and hurried away, preceded by Jan to open the door.

The two officers then rose to take their leave, with a renewed expression of their thanks.

"Our acquaintance must not end here, though," said Madam Von Wiegel; "we shall be happy to see you often during your stay in New York."

Captain Bellew accepted the offer with visible pleasure, Major Montague with a hesitation that was not very flattering, to say the least of it, and an air of cool indifference that did not escape the ladies, and tended no little to confirm Madam Von Wiegel in her prepossession against him.

"What a cold impassible man that is!" said she after the gentlemen had taken their leave.

"Who do you mean, mother?" asked Bertha with a start.

"Why, who could I mean but that Major Montague? Captain Bellew I like very much, indeed, but his friend is one of those persons with whom I could never feel at ease. Still there is something about him, I know not what, that gives you the

impression of a very superior person—far, indeed, above the common level—and he is, without exception, one of the handsomest men I have seen, with manners that a prince might envy. But yet——”

“But yet he is not to my dear mother’s taste?” said Bertha in a lower tone than usual, and a faint, a very faint smile. “Well! I dare say you may be right. There is too much of the field-marshal about him for most people’s liking. Still appearances are sometimes deceitful, so let us not judge our new acquaintance too harshly at first.”

When Bertha found herself alone after the rush and whirl of the day’s emotions, she threw herself on a sofa and buried her face in her hands. “What *am* I to think?” she murmured. “He was not in town *two weeks ago*—it could not have been he!—was it, then, after all, imagination?—yet the handkerchief could not have been so—surely that was reality—but those initials may not have been his? mystery on mystery! does he continue worthy of my love? alas! I know not—God knows. I shall see him again, however, and even that is something.” With this thought she composed her mind, and returned to her mother.



CHAPTER X.

THE CAR OF TRIUMPH, TWO NICE YOUNG MEN, AND A
ROUGH CUSTOMER.

"MY goodness gracious! girls, come here!" cried one of the Miss Hacketts, on the Sunday appointed for the grand demonstration at No. 66, "Will you come quick, I say?"

To this imperative demand the other two responded by approaching the window at which their sister stood, in a double quick march.

In answer to their impatient interrogatories as to the cause of the peremptory summons, Ann Wilhelmina pointed to a phenomenon which stood, in the form of a carriage and pair, at the door of the Gallagher mansion.

"Dear me! what a beautiful carriage!" "Isn't it grand?" "Where *did* it come from?" "Why, *surely*, it a'nt their own!" "La! if it were, nobody could stand them, and, goodness knows, but they're bad enough now!" "My gracious! can it be their own? Do let us watch and see!"

The clouds of uncertainty soon rolled away, for out came Mrs. Tom Gallagher, and after her, in quick succession, the three eldest of her unmarried daughters, all "rolling in silks," as Atty Garrell would say. No cavalier being in attendance, the

four ladies assisted each other into the carriage, and there established themselves in the most luxuriously-easy postures—then the liveried coachman closed the door and mounted his box, and cracked his whip in true Jehu style, and dashed down the street and turned out on the avenue, (agreeable, it was supposed, to previous instructions,) leaving the three Miss Hacketts at their window, and Tom Gallagher at *his* window—for some reason best known to himself he had positively refused to ride to Church that first day in the new carriage—his two younger daughters at another point of observation, and Mrs. Fogarty and Julia at *their* window—for they, too, had discovered the strange appearance at the Gallagher door—and, in short, a dozen others in the vicinity, all at the windows, and in a perfect state of bewilderment, wondering whether they were sleeping or waking;—in this latter condition of doubt, Tom was not exactly included, that worthy man being quite satisfied that the vision was real, and represented one thing with another some two thousand odd dollars of his honest money, between carriage, horses, harness, livery, ladies' dresses, jewelry and all. Truly it was a goodly show, and as it rolled on and on through the crowded streets many an admiring, and, perhaps, envying glance was cast on the fortunate quartette of ladies who sat so comfortably

“On cushions made with taste,”

as sung by Sam Lover for the love-sick individual

who preferred to all more pretentious equipages his Peggy's "Low-back'd car."

Being Sunday morning and the hour for "last Mass," many of the Gallaghers' acquaintances were found amongst the crowds on the trottoirs, and great was the astonishment of the persons so taken by surprise. Then did each one nudge their companion's elbow, if companion they had, to "look at Tom Gallagher's people in a grand new coach"—then, too, did these pedestrians endeavor to catch the eye of any of the ladies in the carriage, and if they succeeded in obtaining a recognition, with how much importance did they look round to see how many noticed the honor they had received in being favored with a look or a smile from out of such an equipage. Nor were these recognitions at all like angels' visits—they were neither "few nor far between," for it was no part of Mrs. Gallagher or the Misses Gallaghers' programme to hide *themselves* from public view whilst exhibiting their new carriage.

Arrived at the Church-door, the excitement reached its climax, which climax was capped by an ironical curtsy from a neglected cousin of Mrs. Gallagher's, who was fortunate enough to get within speaking distance of her opulent relative.

"Wisha, then, the top o' the mornin' to you, Nelly Cooney!" said or rather cried the somewhat sluttish individual, whose clothes, in addition to being poor and mean, looked dirty and untidy. "Ah!

sure, isn't it myself that's overjoyed entirely to see you comin' ridin' up in your own carriage, with everything on you so grand and so beautiful, an' them darlin' fine ladies, your daughters, all dressed in silk, with as much red goold on them and you as would make a lady of *me*! Och! Nelly! Nelly! sure its little you thought once in your day you'd ever come to this!—but it's givin' me the could shoulder she is!—augh! see what it is to be poor!" she wound up, with a comical leer at the by-standers who were well disposed to enjoy the joke.

Amongst those who witnessed this amusing scene were Madam Von Wiegel and her daughter, and also the Murrays who were alighting at the moment from Mr. Murray's modest equipage, from the driver's seat of which Robert sprang to hand out the ladies. At the same moment Henry Hackett and his son Michael stood back to make way for their passage and raised their hats respectfully.

"There," said Henry after they passed, "there go some real Irish ladies—not any of your sham quality—and just look at the difference between them and the Gallaghers there that scarce know which end of them is uppermost because they have made money and can dress in style and drive a carriage!"

"True for you, Mr. Hackett," said a decent-looking elderly man near him, whose sinewy hands bespoke the son of toil; "true for you, sir! it's easy knowin' them that were always used to good

dress and good livin'—they never put any airs on them, for they know the people will respect them anyhow! I knew them ladies and gentlemen were the rale sort the minute I laid my eyes on them."

"Well! that old gentleman, Mr. Murray—that young officer is his son—raised himself here to what he is. To be sure he came of decent people at home and had a good share of education when he came out, but still he was low enough in cash—so he told me himself not many days ago—but somehow he got along first-rate here and God prospered his endayvors, and now he's worth a power of money, they say, and has retired from business, and I tell you what he's just the man that's always ready, too, to befriend any one from home when they stand in need of it. A gentleman every inch of him, and so is his son."

"You know them all well, Mr. Hackett?" said another man civilly.

"Well! I can't say I know them well," said Henry, "but I'm proud to say that both families are customers of mine, and a good spoke in my wheelthey are, too!"

Here the Mass-bell rang, and the loiterers on the steps and about the door hurried hat in hand into the Church calm and collected as Christians ought to be entering the house of God, which is "the house of prayer," and "the place where *His* glory dwelleth."

After the new turn-out had rolled away, and van-

ished from the wondering eyes of the neighbors of Mrs. Gallagher Tom put on his hat, walked to 25th street, where he heard Mass in St. Columba's Church, with reverence and devotion. Tom Gallagher was at heart a good, practical Christian, though he seldom talked of religion, and, indeed, knew only as much about it as was necessary to discharge the duties it prescribes. Tom was no controversialist, or, for that matter, any other *ist*—but he loved his religion, and practised its precepts to the best of his ability without either affecting piety, or going out of his way to establish a reputation, for, as he used to say himself, when by chance the subject was forced upon him: "I don't care one brass button about what people think of me, when I know I'm keepin' the Commandments of God and the Church, and doing no hurt or harm to any one—at least that I know of."

He had just got back to his own door when the carriage drove up, and Tom, according to *his* ideas of politeness, made all haste to open the carriage-door and let the ladies out. Peter, finding his office forestalled, drew back out of sight grinning from ear to ear.

Poor Tom got little thanks for his pains, for a chorus of "*mys*," and "*las*," and "*dear mes*," greeted his ear within the vehicle as soon as he opened it; his wife looked daggers—and sharper instruments if they *could* be looked—and each in turn, as they stepped from the carriage, accosted him with:

"Tom Gallagher! you're the stupidest man living this day!"

"Dear me, pa! what a thing for you to do!—I'm sure you might know better than that at any rate!"

"I'o expose us so before Peter and all the neighbors!"

"Pa! I'm really ashamed of you!"

Tom looked at each speaker in succession, and stood gazing after them as they flounced up the steps in high dudgeon, with a most ludicrous expression of amazement on his honest countenance.

"Peter!" screamed Miss Gallagher from the top of the steps, in a falsetto voice loud enough to be heard by all passers-by; "Peter, ma says to put the horses in the stable, and the carriage in the coach-house!"

"Yes, miss!" said Peter aloud with a flourishing bow, but in an under tone he added: "I'd like to know where else I'd put the horses but in the stable!—coach-house, inagh! hadn't we better wait till it's *built*?"

So irreverently soliloquized Peter as he dashed away to the livery-stable to put the loves of iron-grays in the way of getting their dinner.

Meanwhile the offended dignitaries of the household had marched processionally into the hall, followed at more than civil distance by the nominal owner of the mansion, who felt that a storm-cloud was about to discharge itself on his devoted head, though of what kind it was to be—whether rain,

hail, or thunder and lightning, he was not sufficiently weather-wise to know beforehand. He thought, however, and, perhaps, thought wisely, that the longer the cloud was gathering, the more violent would be the discharge when it came.

Closing the door carefully after them, then, Tom screwed his courage up to the sticking point, and civilly requested to know in what he had offended.

The whole four took upon themselves to answer, but his wife's voice, being the shrillest, he heard her best.

"Yes! you may well ask, Tom Gallagher! as if you didn't know!—it's ashamed of yourself you ought to be! it was a nice thing, wasn't it, now? to see the likes of you, Tom Gallagher—a man that drives his own carriage——"

"Faith! I don't—Peter drives it."

"None of your dry jokes, now! I'm in no joking humor, I can tell you. I say wasn't it a nice thing to see you coming to open the carriage-door yourself, instead of lettin' the coachman come down and open it, and make a polite bow to us as we got out?"

"Why, bless my soul!" cried Tom, "I thought it was just the thing for a gentleman like me—ahem! to hand the ladies out when I chanced to be to the fore."

"Yes! but it *wasn't* just the thing for you to open the door yourself, pa! and mind you don't do it again!"

Tom promised, as *per force* he should, and was turning away, naturally supposing the lecture ended, but it was not.

"Tom Gallagher!" said his wife when she caught a full view of his outer man on the rear side, "Tom Gallagher!" elevating her voice at every syllable till it reached a most formidable height, "do you mean to say you went to Church in *that* trim?"

"Why, what other trim would I go in?" demanded Tom, who was growing a little restive.

"Well! now, girls! just look at that!" said the excited matron, taking hold of her passive lord and master and turning him backwards and forwards so as to give the young ladies a full view of him front and rear; "just look at that! look at the coat he went to last Mass in—and the vest—and the pants!"

"Why, what's the matter with the clothes?" said Tom stoutly facing the enemy. "Do you see any holes in them?"

"No, I don't——"

"Thunder and turf, then!" cried Tom, "what's the reason you make such a rout about them?"

"Because they're not fit to be seen—that's the reason—and if you had the spirit of a dog, or cared anything at all about your family, you wouldn't go to last Mass on a Sunday in that old faded-looking suit! Lord help us!" she added pathetically, "there's little use in our trying to make a decent

appearance, or get into any sort of respect, while that's the way *you* go on!"

Here one of the young ladies opened the parlor door, saying as she did so, in a voice loud enough to be heard all through the room: "Why, ma! what's the use of your talking to pa? you know you'll never get *him* to dress with any kind of taste?"

Horror of horrors! the parlor was not vacant as they expected, but tenanted by two young gentlemen, excruciatingly well-dressed, and in fact belonging undeniably to that enviable class whose peculiar neatness is vulgarly and very generally associated with the possible inhabitants of band-boxes.

These well-dressed young gentlemen found it no easy matter, we may suppose, to keep their respective countenances, especially when the confusion of the mother and daughters on discovering their unexpected proximity assumed a really ludicrous aspect. They were so much intent on the subject matter of their visit, however, and so anxious to cultivate the favorable opinion of the family, that they succeeded to a marvel in maintaining their composure.

The first awkward moment being over, and the somewhat constrained salutation satisfactorily exchanged—the visitors being introduced to "ma" as Mr. Green and Mr. Brown, whom the young ladies had met at a surprise party* a few evenings

* To our readers out of New York, and especially those of European habits, it may be necessary to explain what manner

before. The truth was that they had been the theme of many a critical and eulogistic colloquy ever since amongst the Gallagher ladies, and "ma" herself was secretly overjoyed to see them. As for Tom, he had betaken himself from the hall to some other region of the house, impelled by a gentle hint from his wife in the shape of a thump on the back from her little wiry fist, together with a vocal admonition in an eager whisper, to "be off and make himself decent, and then come down to the parlor."

On his way up stairs Tom had, I regret to say, some serious thoughts of disobeying, but the penalty was too much for Tom's courage to brave, and the combined attack of six able and efficient vocal organs was not to be idly provoked, so Tom prudently smothered his rebellious inclination, arrayed himself in his best black suit, and resolutely descended to the parlor, where he found the gentlemen of color on their legs and in the act of bidding "good-bye" to the ladies. Another introduction had, of course, to be gone through, and then Tom asked the young gentlemen what was their hurry—couldn't they stay and have a bit of dinner? To which Messrs. Brown and Green responded that they would with pleasure, only they had made an

of party a "surprise party" is. This we can do in brief by stating that a surprise party *is* a surprise. The guests arrange it all themselves—go uninvited and (are supposed to be) unexpected, and *take their supper with them*. As far as we know it is one of our "American institutions."

appointment with some friends to go down to Staten Island, and they guessed it was about time to be off.

"Well! you mustn't be strangers, now!" said Mrs. Gallagher, as they approached in turn to shake hands with the mistress of the mansion; "you must come often and see us."

"Much obliged to you, Mrs. Gallagher! we'll stop in some evening soon," pointing the promise at the young ladies with their bewitchingly expressive eyes—as Mag and Ellie called them when the girls got a chance of discussing the visit that afternoon."

"Expressive indeed!" said Fanny contemptuously; "I don't see the least bit of expression about them!"

For some reason best known to herself, Fanny's admiration of the Green and Brown beaux had decidedly cooled down during the recent visit.

"You don't, eh?" said Mag with a saucy laugh, winking at Ellie at the same time. "Well! that *is* surprising—a'nt it, Ellie?"

"Very!" was Ellie's response; "but it a'nt so surprising, after all, Mag, when I come to think of it. You know Fanny has a great partiality for *the Irish*," speaking with an air, "and as poor Mr. Green and Mr. Brown don't happen to be 'Hirish,' as the Englishman says, why, of course, they a'nt to *her* taste."

"None of your impudence, miss!" said the elder sister, her cheek flaming with indignation; "I ha'nt

any more liking for 'the Irish' than you have yourself, and I'm not so hard up for beaux as your ladyships think !"

"My ! Fanny, don't lose your temper about it !" said the provoking Mag ; "don't everybody know the only admirer *you* have is that vulgar red-haired McConoghy."

"Don't dare to say that again !" cried Fanny, starting to her feet in a towering passion. "If ever I hear you mention McConoghy's name to me, I'll get ma to close the doors on Green and Brown ! I will !—so mind that ! Indeed, I think it would be the best of her play, at any rate, not to encourage them to the house, for I think they're nothing else but a pair of mean scamps—do you hear that, now ?"

"Sour grapes, Fanny !" said Ellie, whilst Mag put her spread fingers to her nose with that significant gesture commonly meant to express the phrase "Does your mother know you're out ?" or some other equally elegant interrogatory of kindred meaning.

Luckily for the peace of the house, a ring came to the door—a loud, full, sonorous ring, and the three amiable sisters hurried away to see who it was. Who should it be but the veritable McConoghy himself, to the infinite amusement of Ellie and Mag, the great annoyance of Fanny, and the no less great satisfaction of their father, with whom this personage was a particular favorite. They had been friends for years long ; McConoghy had kept a small grocery near Centre Market ; which busi-

ness had been lately exchanged for a clerkship in a wholesale store down town, which, if it did not pay quite so well, was, at least, more stylish, and that was a great object with a fresh, florid, good-looking widower of forty, "without chick or child" to impede any matrimonial speculations into which Mr. McConoghy might be disposed to enter.

A brainless, good-humored, good-natured fellow was the ex-grocer, and as he loved his pipe and his glass—both, however, in moderation—and once in a while cracked a joke—just such a broad hearty joke as Tom could relish—why, it followed as a natural consequence, that Tom Gallagher relished *his* society above that of all others, and always welcomed his appearance with unbounded cordiality. Nothing was more natural, under such circumstances, than that John McConoghy should begin to raise his eyes to one or other of his friends' daughters, and he did raise them with a vengeance, for they settled on Fanny, the tallest, the most imposing, and withal the oldest of the five unwedded Miss Gallaghers. His audacity was reprobated in the strongest terms by the fair object thereof—less strongly by her prudent mother, who admitted him to be "a rising man, and a pushing man, too," and, therefore, "not to be sneezed at;" whilst by the younger sisters it was not reprobated at all, for Fanny was wont to put on airs of superiority that were less than agreeable to the juniors, and those young ladies were "tickled to death," as they confi-

dentially admitted, at the thoughts of Fanny having McConoghy for a beau—or a would-be beau, which was all the same. Her slight appreciation of Green and Brown had provoked two of them, at least, beyond endurance, and they charitably determined to “let her have tit for tat, and give her enough of McConoghy, anyhow !”

Leaving Tom Gallagher and his jovial guest to their afternoon pipe with what other creature-comforts might be dispensed to them ; and leaving also Misses Ellie and Mag to amuse themselves, according to promise, with Fanny and her unlucky Irish suitor, we will “just pop in” after the manner of that pink of politeness, Paul Pry, to pay a too-long deferred visit to the Hackett family next door.

The three sisters and Michael had just got home from Vespers. Now it must not be supposed that Michael had enjoyed the honor of escorting his sisters to Church. No such thing ; they had made a long *detour* through various streets and squares which they need not have traversed had they not felt the urgent necessity of showing off three new dresses, and as many new bonnets—(I beg pardon, *hats* ! the word bonnet is but little known in American parlance)—together with other accompanying items of a fashionable Spring costume. Michael, on the contrary, had jogged along churchward beside his father “in sober gray bedight,” till, having reached the family-pew just as Vespers commenced, they quietly took possession. In this

possession they remained undisturbed till the glorious *Magnificat* was pealing through the Church, when the three sisters, like Cœur de Lion and his knights at Fontevrault,

“ ——— came sweeping up the aisle,”

and stood at the pew-door till their male relatives stepped out to give them admission. Etiquette required they should get inside, but that measure being easier conceived than executed, the father and son were forced to transfer themselves to the floor of the aisle, very much against their will, till the three belles had passed in, at that fashionably-late period of the Evening Service of the Church.

Vespers and Benediction being over, Henry Hackett betook himself, in company with one or two old acquaintances, to the fashionable locality of Murray Hill and Madison Avenue to enjoy at the same time the lovely Spring evening and a social chat about things past and present—chiefly the former, where it lay smiling far behind and far away in that merry time and that lovely land where “a’ the three” had been amongst the stoutest and lithest hurlers on Tipperary ground. Michael went home to resume the adventures of certain prairie-hunters whose hair-breadth escapes by flood and field had greater charms for him than even the freshness and verdure of Madison Park, much as he loved Dame Nature’s garb of vernal beauty.

He was not long left to the quiet enjoyment of his book, for his sisters soon made their appearance, and

stationed themselves, as usual, at the windows, to take cognizance of the passers-by, what they wore, and other notable circumstances therewith connected. In the prosecution of this profitable work they chanced to espy the red-haired aspirant to Fanny Gallagher's hand making his *entree* at No. 66, and being fully aware of the gentleman's identity, they marvelled much that the Gallaghers would have anything to do with such a mean fellow, and a rough Irishman withal.

"What in the world brings *him* there of all people?" questioned Sarah Eugenia; "I'm sure it was well worth their while to set up such a splendid turn-out if that's the kind of company they're going to keep!"

"But I tell you there's some real nice people go in there," said Ann Wilhelmina with an emphatic nod; "weren't those two nice young gentlemen, Mary, that we saw going in just after Mass-time?"

Mary was equally impressed with the niceness of the young gentlemen.

"But, my goodness! where was *I* then," said Sarah eagerly, "that I didn't see them?—what did they look like?"

"Ha! ha! you missed *that*, Sarah!" Ann replied laughing. "Well! I can tell you they were worth seeing; they were really elegant-looking fellows, regular Americans, with moustaches and dark eyes——"

"Both dark eyes?" Sarah had a weakness for dark eyes and dark faces.

"Yes, I think they had—both of them—and my! how nice their hair looked, and their collars so nicely turned down, and their neck-ties so *elegant*—oh dear! they were such *nice* fellows!" and Ann Wilhelmina heaved a gentle sigh as she added in a languishing tone: "No fear that any such will call at 68—poor shabby little 68!"

"Who on earth could they be?"

"Dear knows! but one thing is certain, they *must* be distinguished!"

"Yes!" said Michael, "and so they are—ahem!"

"Why, Michael! did *you* see them?"

Michael nodded; his sisters were round him in a moment.

"Won't you tell us, then, who they are?—do now, that's a good fellow."

"Guess, and I will."

Various suppositions were advanced by the sisters, one wilder and more extravagant than another.

"Perhaps they're officers in the navy?"

"Guess again."

"In the army?"

"The chaps *I* saw weren't officers of any kind," coolly said Michael, "so try something else."

"Perhaps they're lawyers?"

"No."

"Government-clerks?"

"No—guess again."

"We'll guess no more—we give it up!—but stay—perhaps they're clerks in stores?"

"You're getting nearer it now—do you give it up?"

"Yes! yes!"

Whatever was Michael's answer, a burst of exulting merriment followed, and the sisters laughed till the tears ran down their cheeks.

"Now, are you sure that that's what they are, Michael?" demanded Sarah as soon as she could speak.

"Are *you* sure you're lying on that sofa?"

"Well! if that a'nt the best thing I've heard for a long time! I'm as glad as if somebody put a hundred-dollar bill in my hand. Only think, girls! how mortified they'll be when they come to find it out, for you may be sure they take them for something great! But hush! here's pa!—not a word of it to him!"



CHAPTER XI.

HARP-STRINGS AND HEART-STRINGS.

A FEW evenings after their first visit to Rheinfeldt House, Major Montague and Captain Bellew found themselves again in the pleasant drawing-room of that old mansion, in company with Mr. Murray, his son and daughter. As the two gentlemen walked up the short avenue together Montague said to his friend: "Mind, Bellew! no slips of the tongue—we are all strangers now—perhaps ever shall be!"—"Ne craignez pas, mon ami!" responded Bellew just as the door opened.

"No *mon-amee* live here," said Jan, and he was about to close the door in their face. He had caught the captain's last words, and misunderstood their import.

"Madam Von Wiegel does, though," said Bellew, and laughing heartily the two friends entered the hall.

"Va-ry pleasant gentlemen, on mine word!" said Jan complacently as he ushered them up stairs, having by this time recognized them as the English officers who had lunched with the ladies some days before.

Well-bred persons of either sex are never long in making an acquaintance, and although Mr. Murray

did contract his eyebrows and look rather coldly on "the liveried servants of Queen Victoria" when they were introduced to him—for Randal Murray had, truth to tell, an out-and-out dislike of everything British—(except roast beef and plum pudding)—still the new-comers were scarcely half an hour in the room when—British officers though they were—the old gentleman was quite at home with them; especially the captain, whose genial disposition was so much akin to his own that it thawed the ice immediately. The captain knew Dublin well, moreover, had been stationed at the Portobello Barracks, and could describe every remarkable scene around the Irish metropolis from Howth to Phoenix Park, and from Harold's Cross to Cullen's Wood. He had climbed to the top of Nelson's Pillar, and, a greater feat still, danced "a Donnybrook jig" with the prettiest girl at the fair.

"I wouldn't doubt you," said Randal in high appreciation of the captain's good humor, "but you didn't venture to make too free, did you?" he added with sly meaning.

"A very little," said the captain in the same tone; "I would fain have saluted her in my own way as I handed her back to the bosom of an admiring crowd, I suppose of relations——"

"Well?"

"Well I got slapped for my pains, that's all, and told to have manners, sir," and the captain mimicked the pretty brogue of the Donnybrook belle to

such perfection that the gentlemen all laughed, and the ladies all smiled.

Randal Murray rubbed his hands and laughed immoderately. "Good for you, captain! good for you!—that was a touch, you know, of

"——— the wild sweet-briery fence,
Which round the flowers of Erin dwells——"

"Precisely," said the captain, finishing the verse.

"That warns the touch, while winning the sense,
Nor charms us least when it most repels."

In this strain the two ran on with the easiest and most delightful familiarity, much to the amusement of Madam Von Wiegel and Alice who were deeply interested listeners. Robert and Bertha were discussing the merits of a popular lecturer whom they had been to hear on the previous evening, whilst Major Montague turned over the leaves of a sketch-book at a table near them.

Bellew's quick ear caught the subject under discussion between Robert and Bertha, and he called out:

"*Apropos* to your subject, Lieutenant Murray! this lecturing business seems to be an established institution here."

"Decidedly, captain! and a famous institution I take it to be."

"As how?"

"Why, for the diffusion of useful knowledge, to be sure."

"And the diffusers of such knowledge?"

"Oh! that is—as it may be," said Robert laughing; "we are not particuar as to qualifications."

"It appears not, indeed. Major Montague and I were much amused to-day by an advertisement we saw in one of the morning papers, to the effect that Hardman E. W. R. White, a colored gentleman, lately escaped from slavery in that State whereto Susanna's dusky Troubadour was going 'with his banjo on his knee,' will lecture this evening in the Tabernacle—public specially invited to attend, on charitable grounds, as Mr. White is lecturing to raise funds *to educate himself*. Now on what do you suppose will this alphabetically-great colored individual hold forth for public enlightenment?"

"Oh! on abolitionism, of course—and a capital audience he'll have, too—I can tell you that! He's a keen shaver, depend on it, for that advertisement of his will draw more than the well-earned fame of the first orator in the land. We're a great people, you know, Captain Bellew! and have great ears of our own——"

"For which auricular appendages our British naturalists give you full credit as a nation," said the captain with sly emphasis.

"Ha! ha! Bob—how do you like that?" cried his father; "I say, there's a tap of the lion's paw for you."

"Never mind, father!" said Robert with a gay laugh, "the royal beast will not always have the laugh on his side. He may catch a Tartar some day

in this direction, and that when he least expects it. If John Bull gives Brother Jonathan credit for long ears, he may chance to find that he has a long head, with a reasonable share of brains in it."

The laugh that followed was heartily joined in by the good-humored captain, who being called upon by Randal to admit that Bob had given "a Rowland for his Oliver," freely admitted the fact, with the further possibility that Jonathan's cranium *might* contain a certain quantum of the organic matter indicated by the lieutenant.

"What says your friend?" asked the old gentleman abruptly.

"Friend, what sayest thou?" demanded the merry captain, turning quickly, not sorry, it would seem, to send an inquiring glance in that direction.

"I rather think Major Montague has not been honoring us with his attention," said Robert drily.

"Pardon me, sir," said Montague, with the slightest possible tinge of irony in his tone, "I happen to be of that commendable class of persons whose ears are ever open to the words of wisdom"—I, therefore, heard *you* perfectly—I am not prepared, however, to give an opinion on so grave a subject." And without raising his eyes he placed the drawing-book before Bertha, pointing to a faintly-traced scene he had been sketching, as if half unconsciously, on a blank leaf.

The blood rushed to the young lady's cheek; she looked up at his face—it was turned towards the

company with a calm cold smile on his haughty lip that sent the blood back to her heart.

There was nothing in the major's speech that young Murray could resent, and he was sorry for it, for he felt as though he would like, of all things, to hear something from Don Bellianus, as he called him, that he *could* take as an affront.

"Ahem!" said the old gentleman, tapping his snuff-box with unwonted energy and determination. "Ahem!" he repeated louder, then handed the rappee to Madam Von Wiegel and Captain Bellew, not forgetting Alice, who smiled sweetly at his absence of mind and said: "Thanks, father! you know I have not yet learned *that* accomplishment." She was watching Bertha's face in a mirror opposite, and her own pale cheek grew crimson red as she saw its pallid hue.

Bellew, feeling the silence a little awkward, hastened to start a fresh topic.

"My dear Mr. Murray! that is capital snuff of yours—almost equal to old Lundy Foot's. You remember that, do you?"

"Remember it, captain! why, bless my soul! of course I do, just as well as I remember 'Kinahan's Malt.' Though, to tell the truth, my palate knew about as much of the qualities of one as my olfactory nerve did of the other, and that wasn't much, I assure you! But it does an old man good, Captain Bellew! to hear the sound of names that were once familiar to his ear. To hear you now speaking

in your full rich Leinster voice of things and places that my boyhood knew so well, I can almost

“‘—— persuade myself that I am not old,
And my locks are not yet gray.’”

“Well! well!” he added cheerfully, “it’s a pity youth can’t last forever—but, after all, I’m not so old but I can enjoy life yet—what think you, Madam Von Wiegel?”

“You will never be so old as that, Mr. Murray,” said the old lady, turning her eyes from Montague’s face, which she had been scrutinizing with a sort of dreamy curiosity, as though it were associated with some vague and half-forgotten memories—“I should be sorry to see you if you were; it is a dreary stage of existence when the heart has grown cold, and outlived its joys and pleasures.”

“From such a state,” said the captain, “angels and ministers of grace defend us!—better die in youth on the tented field, and fill a soldier’s grave.”

“With the tears of *one we know* to bedew the sod,” whispered Bertha, as she passed him and glided from the room. She had not even bent her head, and no one but himself caught the word. Its effect, however, was like magic, and the gay, laughing face of Bellew was instantly overcast, and the blood rushed to his very temples. He started and looked up, but Bertha was gone, and his eyes involuntarily turned on his friend, who was watching him with a look of arch intelligence that did not tend to lessen his embarrassment.

Luckily Madam Von Wiegel came to the rescue, though all unconsciously to herself, by proposing cards, and invited the captain to be her partner for a rubber at whist; the offer was gladly accepted; the major took Alice for his partner, and the game commenced.

"But what is Mr. Murray to do?" said Madam Von Wiegel.

"Oh, never mind me. I'll look on till Bertha comes, then we'll have a game of chess. By the bye, Robert, will you go like a good and dutiful son, and a gallant squire of dames, as I know you are, and seek my fair opponent that is to be?"

"Certainly, sir," said Robert, starting from the lounge, whereon he had been reclining in moody thought. "I'll have her here in five minutes if she be above ground. Were I to bring her in chains, she shall come."

"Ay! such chains," cried Bellew laughing, "as those which James Fitz-James 'flung o'er the neck' of Malcolm Grame when

" 'He gently drew the glittering band
And laid the clasp in Ellen's hand.' "

"Pri'thee, silence!" said Robert in the same humorous strain, looking back from the door, "thy words are mayhap of deeper meaning than befits the shallowness of mine understanding. Farewell! may luck attend you!"

"Et vous, aussi, mon brave!" called the captain after him, "je vous souhaite le bonheur!"

"Charity begins at home," said the Major; "why throw wishes away on others? The deal is yours, madam! What an enviable flow of spirits your son has, Mr. Murray! Is he always so gay as we see him now?"

"Well no, not always, major! not always—there, mind your ace-trump! It's a curious thing, that Bob is always in *better* spirits and in *worse* spirits here than he is anywhere else. Is not that a fact. Alice?"

"I should be sorry to say it is not, papa, when you say it is," said Alice with her gentle smile, "but——"

"But what? come, out with it!"

"Well! I never observed it, sir! but, of course, your evidence is sufficient to establish a fact of even greater importanc."

"Very ingeniously put," laughed the captain, and the stately major condescended to smile as his eagle glance rested for a moment on the fair girl's face.

Five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes passed before Bertha entered the room, and Robert was not with her. She was paler even than usual, and traces of tears were on her cheeks. The first glance she met was that of Montague, and her eye fell under its keen scrutiny, and a faint blush suffused her cheek.

"I say, Bertha! where did you leave Bob?" cried Mr. Murray with a meaning glance at Madam Von Wiegel. "He went to seek you."

"I know he was kind enough to do so, sir," said Bertha taking her seat near Alice, "but I left him in the library answering a note he has just received."

"A note ! what note ?" asked the easily-alarmed father.

"He will tell you that himself, sir ! I have no right to speak of its contents."

"Humph !" said Mr. Murray lapsing into thoughtfulness, "Humph !—ah !—well !—no matter"—compressing his lips very tightly as he dealt the cards, "I dare say it is of no consequence. An honor, by my word ! Bertha, my dear ! is your harp unstrung, or has music lost its charms, or how is it ? Let me see—why I protest I have not heard you play—or sing—since we got back."

"I'm afraid, Mr. Murray ! 'the music's gone up to the moon,'" said Bertha with a faint smile, "or somewhere else beyond the control of my fingers."

"Pooh ! pooh ! 'call a spirit from the vasty deep !' to bring it back again."

"Do play something !" whispered Alice, "I long to hear your harp again."

"Are you fond of music, Captain Bellew ?" said Bertha rising.

"Oh very ! and the harp is my favorite instrument. I am quite of the opinion of Moore that, above all others, it breathes 'the soul of music.'"

"And the soul of music is the breath of life," added Madam Von Wiegel."

"And the key of memory," said Major Montague

speaking for the first time. Bertha looked at him, but his eyes were fixed on the cards in his hand, and his face was as a sealed book, cold and calm as the Apollo-Belvidere's.

Just then Robert Murray entered the room, and in answer to his father's eager inquiry said he had received a note from one of his brother officers apprising him that they were under orders to join their regiment within the week.

"Bad news, Bob, bad news!" said the old gentleman; Alice changed color and drew a long breath.

"You forget, my dear sir," said Bellew smiling, "that your country's sword is where Cowper describes Admiral Kempenfeldt's when he went down in the *Royal George*—

" ' His sword was in the sheath,
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfeldt went down
With twice four hundred men.' "

It is only to *drill* your son is going, not to *fight*."

"Well! there is comfort in that," said the old gentleman laughing, but what more he intended to say was cut short by the sound of Bertha's harp, as she swept the strings in a graceful prelude.

"What shall I play, mother?" she asked, turning half round, but without waiting for an answer she commenced "*Lochaber*."

The card-table was instantly deserted, and Mr. Murray ensconced himself in an arm-chair near the fire, rubbing his hands as usual when well pleased,

and crying "That's for you, Robert ! that's for you, my lad !"

The melting tenderness of the air had softened every heart, and young Murray, lying on a distant sofa, covered his face with one hand to hide the trickling tears, of which he was ashamed.

"Why not play 'The Girl I Left Behind Me?'" said a voice near Bertha, it was that of Montague, and he spoke with an emphasis half ironical, half contemptuous.

Without answering, Bertha glided at once into "I'd Mourn the Hopes that Leave Me," and she saw a smile curling the haughty lip of her nearest auditor, where he had thrown himself on the divan near her with his back to the company. Having played some light and beautiful variations, Bertha paused.

"The third is the charm," said Montague carelessly ; there was a tremor in his voice, however, that only one ear caught—and it set one heart a-beating.

But Bertha, without appearing to notice the words, turned to the others, and saying "I will sing you an old—a very old song," played a plaintive symphony, and then sang in a voice of thrilling sweetness.

"Mary, I believed thee true,
And I was bless'd in thus believing,
But now I mourn that e'er I knew
A girl so fair and so deceiving."

Breaking off suddenly, however, she changed the

accompaniment, and after a moment's thought went on in a different measure :

“ They had not met for many years,
But oh ! those years were fraught
With woes that find no balm in tears,
That win no hope from thought.”

“ There ! I will positively sing no more !” she said, rising abruptly, and not daring to look at Montague, whose voice, nevertheless, reached her ear in a thrilling whisper.

“ Sibyl ! siren ! there are chords unseen that you wring to agony !”

“ What did you say, Major Montague ?” she said, affecting a composure which she was far from feeling. “ You want ‘ Rule Britannia ’—well ! Miss Murray will favor you with that—she is quite English in her tastes, I assure you !—Alice, my dear ! won’t you oblige Major Montague with ‘ God Save the Queen,’ or ‘ The British Grenadiers,’ or ‘ Black-Eyed Susan ?’ ”

What was there in this odd jumble of names that made Montague start and change color ? Whatever it was the feeling soon passed, for he came forward smiling, and said, as he resumed his former seat :

“ I shall be delighted to hear Miss Murray’s music, if she will so far favor us ; but really, Miss Von Wiegel, I must protest against your choice of airs made on my behalf. My musical taste is not quite so antiquated as you would have your friend be-

lieve. . Permit me to lead you to the harp, Miss Murray !”

“ I am sorry I cannot oblige you, Major Montague,” said Alice, “ but I do not play the harp.”

“ You play the guitar, though,” said Bertha, anxious that her gentle friend should display *some* of her many accomplishments, “ and the piano like an artist ! Let us have my old favorite, the Druid’s chorus in *Norma*, and Robert and I will sing it with you ? Come, Robert ! it may be long before we three blend our voices again !”

There was sadness in her tone, and young Murray’s face was flushed with joy as he took his place beside her at the piano, where Alice was already seated. The old gentleman nodded at Madam Von Wiegel with the brightest of smiles, and then taking a seat beside her on the sofa, he said in a whisper loud enough to reach the ears of the two strangers :

“ Oh ! sure a pair was never seen

So justly form’d to meet, by nature—

The youth excelling so in mien,

The maid in every graceful feature !”

For some reason Bellew looked anxiously at his friend, but the major was, or seemed to be, engrossed with the picture on the wall opposite. It was that of Madam Von Wiegel’s only remaining brother, the uncle Gerald of whom Bertha so often spoke. There was a softened expression in his eyes and on his whole face that even his friend had seldom seen there. Just at this moment Bertha turned, and she

too, caught the expression on Montague's face, and following the direction of his earnest gaze, her own heart swelled, and the tears sprang to her eyes. Bellew saw this though his friend did not, or at least appeared as though he did not.

"Montague!" said he laying his hand lightly on his arm.

The kind, soothing voice broke the spell, and the major starting, looked around with surprise as though half forgetting where he was.

"You are *not* in Castle Mahon, my friend!" said Bellew in a tone of commiseration; "we are far enough away from the old towers to-night, and uncle Gerald is not here to throw oil on the troubled waters."

The chorus commenced, and whatever might have been the secret feelings of the two officers, their musical taste was too highly cultivated not to lose all other sensations for the moment in the exquisite pleasure of hearing; the beautiful conception of Bellini's genius was so chastely and effectively rendered that

"Breathless silence chain'd the lips and hush'd the hearts of all."

Just as the last cadence died away, Jan threw open the door and announced supper. Mr. Murray offered his arm *instantly* to Madam Von Wiegel; Captain Bellew made his bow to Alice, and Robert was not slow in drawing Bertha's arm within his.

"By Jove, Montague, that is a bad omen!" said

Bellew laughing ; " consigned to single blessedness you are unmistakeably ! "

" N'importe, mon cher Gerald ! mon jour viendra ! march on ! I follow ! "

Conversation flowed freely during supper, and the peculiarities of the different characters gave piquant zest to the entertainment ; though all of refined tastes and polished manners, easy, affable and agreeable, there were many shades of difference between the deep, calm earnestness inherited by Bertha from her German ancestors, the lofty intellectual superiority expressed in every word and every look of Montague's, and the half-boyish, half-soldierly, but most agreeable play of Robert's sprightly humor. Captain Bellew was a host in himself ; with his bright genial humor, ample store of anecdotes, and imperturbable good temper, he was one of the best of table-companions, and contributed more than a share to the evening's enjoyment. Montague, though he spoke comparatively little, unbent just so far as to make himself agreeable, and give some occasional glimpses of the treasures with which his mind was stored. He was evidently a man who had seen much, read much and thought more. If feelings or passions he had they were so perfectly under control that it was hard to say whether the courtly repose of his manner was real or artificial. At times, however, he would condescend, as it were, to open the dark lanthorn in which he chose to conceal the brightness of his

intelligence, and a warm glow fell for the moment on each one present.

Few words had passed directly between Montague and Bertha, though they sat directly opposite each other. When supper was almost over, however, the major suddenly said: "The pleasure of wine with you, Miss Von Wiegel." The lady assented, and when they came to bow to each other, he looked her steadily in the face a moment, and then said in a tone half jest, half earnest:

"To the ghosts of buried years—the Druid shapes of memory's grove!"

Bertha raised the glass to her lips, but her hand trembled so that she was forced to set it down, its contents still untasted. Seeing, however, that her emotion was attracting attention, she rallied her composure by one of those efforts which few can make successfully, and taking up the glass, said with a smile that was wan as a wintry sunbeam, "I pledge you, Major Montague, with the further addition: 'What lies beneath the waters of Lethe.'"

"And is seen, nevertheless," he returned with a smile of strange meaning, "like those towers of Lough Neagh by poets sung,

" 'When the clear cold eve's declining,'

or the lady-moon shedding memory's own light on the lone midnight hour and earth's hushed repose."

The listeners were all surprised, none more so than Madam Von Wiegel, who could by no means

understand the singular turn which her daughter and the major had given to the conversation.

The old gentleman cleared his throat several times as though he were meditating a vocal attempt; Alice looked grave; Bellew raised his glass, much interested, it would seem, in watching the sparkling liquid within as it glanced in the yellow gas-light. Robert sat uneasily in his chair, biting his lips and playing with the spoon in the glass before him, the emotions of his mind passing in quick succession over his speaking face.

Trifling as the incident was, it seemed to have thrown a damp on the spirits of each, and Madam Von Wiegel very soon after arose, to the evident relief of the company, who were all, for different reasons, glad to return to the drawing-room.

"Cowled Druids, indeed!—ghosts of buried years, forsooth!" grumbled Robert in Bertha's hearing as they walked up stairs together; "I believe he's one of them himself 'revisiting the glimpses of the moon'—deuce take him for an autocrat, what business has he here?"

An hour later, and Madam Von Wiegel and her daughter, their night prayers over, were seated together by the fire in the old lady's dressing-room; Bertha's eyes were fixed abstractedly on the fantastic shapes of the blazing coals in the grate, her mother's on her face, with a troubled and anxious look.

"Bertha," said she at last, "who is this Major

Montague? There is something in his features that recall old times to me, though I know not that I ever saw him before—but, Bertha! my child! *you did*—and I feel it my duty to ask who and what he is?"

The young lady started, and turned pale, then blushed deeply, then turned and looked into her mother's eyes, and, as if moved by the unutterable love she saw there, she threw her arms around her neck, and laying her head on her shoulder, murmured: "Yes, mother, dearest and best of mothers! you shall know all that I know of Edgar Montague, whose face may well be familiar to you. He is the second son of one you cannot but remember—*Lord Dunmore*."

"Ha! that accounts for it," said Madam Von Wiegel in a tremulous voice.

"Well, my child! it is wearing late—to-morrow you shall tell me all!"



CHAPTER XII.

ADVERSITY IS NOT ALWAYS MISFORTUNE.

MESSRS. GREEN and BROWN were not slow to improve the opportunity offered them by Mrs. Gallagher's extra civility, and the impression they had evidently made on Misses Ellie and Mag. Their visits became longer and more familiar from week to week, for it was only once a week they came, and always together. They had taken the girls—all but Fanny, who declined going—to Niblo's Gardens, and Laura Keene's, and once to the Opera, where the young ladies appeared in full dress in one of the front boxes—with the two exquisitely-dressed beaux in obsequious attendance. Mrs. Gallagher had been, moreover, persuaded (easily enough to say the truth) to give a grand party in honor of Mr. Green and Mr. Brown—Fanny's protest against it notwithstanding—but, as ill luck would have it, Tom insisted on having his friend, McConoghy, at the party, and, worse still, Atty Garrell! As for Atty his presence was not very noticeable, for the poor fellow being overpowered by the show and glitter of the gay company, and the swaggering assurance which passed current amongst them for ease, kept himself modestly in a corner, or behind a door all the evening, except when Tom, to his great relief, beckoned

him out once in a while to refresh his inner man with himself and McConoghy and one or two others, amongst whom was Mr. William H. Fogarty, whose genial qualities were still in him for the drawing out, keen and dry as business had made him. As for "the favored guests" of the "lighted hall," (*i. e.* parlor,) the colored lamps who gave Green and Brown light to that evening's festivity, Tom would have nothing to do with them, more than bare civility; they were a pair of chaps, as he told McConoghy and Atty in confidence, "that he didn't care much about, and let them be who or what they might—and not a know himself knew *who* they were—they were nothing else but a pair of skip-jacks." "If I had my way," Tom added, "I'd soon show them the door, but Mrs. Gallagher and the girls thinks there's nobody like them, and if I as much as looked crooked at them I'd have neither peace nor quietness for many's the long day. I never seen anything like the notions these women get into their heads now-adays. Sometimes I think there's none as foolish as my own, but then again when I look round me and see the way other people's wives and daughters go on I think I'm no worse off than my neighbors after all. Now there's one thing that vexes me maybe more than anything else—the notion they have that everything Irish is low and vulgar, as they say themselves, and nothing's right, or nobody's worth knowing that isn't rale American, or doesn't look American-like. Go no

farther than Green and Brown yonder—now they don't know a thing about *them*—not a thing, but just because they don't look Irish, and dress in style, and put on plenty of airs, they're the darlings all out, and Ellen and the girls won't hear a word against them—not a word. So that's the way it is here!"

"And many other places besides here," said Mr. Fogarty, who was smoking a cigar, sending out a long puff between his teeth, and looking thoughtfully after the wreath of smoke as though wondering what it was going to do with itself now that it was fairly on the world; "you're not alone, Mr. Gallagher! I can tell you that!—it's the fashion here in New York, you see, for ladies to turn up their noses at everything *Irish*, and the consequence is that the gents are *not* Irish—whether they came from Ireland, or had Irish parents, or however it may be, there a'nt one of them will own to be Irish himself. Sometimes, it is true, their speech betrays them, and it's laughable enough to hear them doing the Yankee with a good strong dash of the Munster or Connaught brogue on their tongue. It always puts me in mind of a caricature I saw in *Punch* once—a starched-up English lady who had advertised in the *Times* for a cook, with the usual intimation 'No Irish need apply,' was represented in colloquy with a fat woman whose face, of the broadest and coarsest, was unmistakeably Irish of the lowest type—the lady questions her as to her

country, adding her fear that she is Irish, whereupon the other looks at her sideways, throwing her head back, and exclaims with an air of injured innocence, 'Augh! a'nt I Cornwall, sure?' I never hear man or woman that I know to be Irish, putting on foreign airs or speaking in a way that isn't natural to them but I think of 'a'nt I Cornwall, sure?' and honest Susy."

Tom laughed so heartily at Mr. Fogarty's joke that the cloud of discontent vanished from his brow, and all the world, not excepting Green and Brown, were taken again into his good graces, where they happily remained the rest of the evening. Not so McConoghy, who felt so annoyed at Miss Gallagher's contemptuous treatment of himself, painfully contrasted as it was by the smiles lavished on the two dandified young gentlemen by their respective *dulcineas*, that his good nature was sorely tried, and he felt disposed more than once during that evening to cut the connection and betake himself and his prospects elsewhere. For prospects Mr. McConoghy had, and good prospects, too, as he said to himself with unwonted bitterness. He had given such satisfaction to his employers whilst travelling for orders, that they were about to give him a share in the business, and that share once obtained, John McConoghy was on the high road to prosperity. He didn't see, therefore, why Miss Fanny should treat him as she did, and he all but came to the conclusion that he would forthwith cast his line in

another direction, and try some of the other "good fish" that, according to the ancient proverb, are always "in the sea," as good "as ever were caught."

It so happened that with his mind still running on this angling speculation, Mr. McConoghy strolled next evening into Henry Hackett's shop, where he sometimes went to have a chat with Henry and his son. Being invited up stairs on this occasion after the shop was closed, he went nothing loth, perhaps expecting to see the three fair sisters usually to be found there; if so, he was disappointed, for the Miss Hacketts, finding out by some chance that he was in the store, and fearing that he might possibly be "asked up," had gone in to spend the evening with Julia Fogarty, having no desire for the company of an "ugly Irishman with such an odious name as McConoghy."

Whether John might have been, or was at all disturbed by the absence of the young ladies, it is certain that the evening passed pleasantly, and long before the visitor took his leave a friendly confidence was established between himself and the Hacketts, father and son. John McConoghy had, in some measure, opened his heart, and if he did not exactly tell of his ambitious views or the "bright particular star" on which his hopes were placed, he gave sufficient indications of the state of his mind (or rather affections) to enable his companions, who were neither of them dull in comprehension, to give a pretty good guess as to "how the land lay." The

two successful wooers of Mag and Ellie, and prime favorites of Mrs. Gallagher, were not forgotten, as may well be supposed, and McConoghy made it sufficiently plain that, as far as his kindly nature permitted him to hate any one, he cordially hated them, or rather their absorption of the good graces of his friend Tom's "womankind."

"And to crown all," concluded John, "they brought another chap with them to the party, last night—one of the same kidney, I'll be bound, whatever that is, and between ourselves, Mr. Hackett! I have no great opinion of any of them. But of course when I know nothing at all about them, I can't say a word for fear I'd say what wasn't the truth. This new arrival was introduced as Mr. Sweetman, and Miss Fanny took to him like bird-lime, for no reason that I could see only the name he has. It is not much of a name, to my thinking, but any name will do for the young ladies here except an Irish name—a Mac or an O," he added with some bitterness.

"You never said a truer word than that, Mr. McConoghy," said Henry Hackett; "I see it every day even in these girls of mine, and though it grieves my heart to see it, I can't help it. Everything Irish is low and mean, everything that isn't Irish is genteel and elegant."

"Mr. McConoghy," said Michael, suddenly looking up from an apple he was paring, "*I* know some-

thing that *you* don't know, and I'm sure you'd give a good many dollars to know it."

"Why, what can it be, Michael?" asked the other in surprise, while his father opened his eyes wide and looked at him.

"I can't tell you now, Mr. McConoghy," said the precociously-grave Michael, "but I want you to do one thing for me and then I'll tell you."

"And what is the thing, Michael?"

"Will you take the Gallaghers—I mean the ladies—to Taylor's Saloon some evening—the sooner the better? You know you can ask them out for a walk, and take them down Broadway, and then when you come to Taylor's ask them to have a plate of oysters or something."

"Yes, yes, I could do that easy enough," said John, laughing heartily at what he called Mike's simplicity, "but you see, Mike, it's just like putting the grain of salt on the bird's tail to catch it. Them ladies wouldn't be seen in the street with poor John McConoghy for a mint of money, and I'm sure they'd almost bite the nose off' me,—or at any rate laugh in my face, if I made so free as to ask them out for a walk. You don't know them, Michael, as well as I do!" and the poor fellow sighed deeply.

"Well! do it as you will, you must *do* it," said Mike peremptorily.

"But even if I *could* do it, what good would it do me?"

"That's the secret," said Michael, "and I told you before you shouldn't hear it till you'd do my bidding. Will you, or will you not?"

"I'd be glad to do it, Mike, if I only knew how. But upon my word, I haven't the least idea of how to go about it. Unless Tom stood my friend," he added musingly.

"He *will* stand your friend," said Mike, "if you only tell him that a friend of yours and of his wants the thing done—and tell him, besides, that if he'll get the ladies to go—even if you're not with them, though *I'd* sooner you were—he'll not be unthankful to himself for doing it. But don't bring in my name, Mr. McConoghy! for the ladies would never forgive me if they knew I'd be playing tricks on them, and that's just what I'm doing now, or mean to do, please goodness."

"Well!" said McConoghy rising to go, "I'll do as you tell me, anyhow, Michael, and if we fail why you can't blame me——"

"You'll *not* fail, I know you won't, and after the visit to Taylor's whether *you're* with them or not—come and put me in mind of the secret, and you'll *hear it*, never fear!"

"Very good, Michael, I'll get Tom to take the thing in hands, though it's very like going on a fool's errand, when I don't know myself what I'm about. No matter, it's all a joke, anyhow, and there can't come much harm of it, one way or the other. But upon my credit, Michael, *if it was the*

first of April I wouldn't do it, for I know you're a sly customer. Good night, at any rate !”

Hands were shook, and good-byes exchanged, and the three had descended to the little hall together, when in came the three young ladies. They were quite taken aback on meeting McConoghy face to face, and though each in turn honored him with the tips of her right-hand fingers, and a nod of icy condescension, with a formal inquiry as to how he did, he felt nowise encouraged to prolong the conversation, or turn the meeting to further account.

The visitor being gone, and the family re-assembled in the little sitting-room above, the girls began to rate their father for keeping such low company.

“What in the world made you bring such a person here, pa ?” inquired the eldest young lady with great earnestness.

“I didn't *bring* him—he *came*,” was the laconic answer.

“Well, but just imagine, pa ! how it would be,” said the middle young lady, “if it was daylight !—what would the neighbors think to see such a big, coarse, vulgar-looking fellow going out from here ? Why my ! they'd have it all around that he was after some of us ! and——”

“And I wish you may ever get the like of him, my fine damsel !” interrupted her father angrily. “I can tell you there's little danger of his being after any of *you* !—he's in a fair way of being independent soon, and he wants a wife with money, what *you*

haven't to get. Besides, girls! he wants a wife that can take charge of a house, and make herself useful in it, and not be above her business. You know yourselves whether there's such a wife *here* for him or any one else. Get the lamp, Michael! till we go to bed."

"What are you grinning at, you good-for-nothing monkey?" exclaimed Sarah Eugenia, glad to find some excuse for venting the wrath which her father's words had kindled within her.

"Wait till I've more time, and I'll tell you!" said Michael looking over his shoulder as he left the room, "but I'll *take* time now to tell you this, that father has more patience with you than *I'd* have, if I was in his place."

"God help them! God help them!" said the father compassionately as he took the way to his bedroom, "they're ill-fitted to wrestle with the world—as long as God leaves me over them they're all right, but what would become of them, poor things, if they had to shift for themselves!"

The girls laughed derisively when their father was out of hearing. "I guess pa'd make a good preacher!" said one.

"No, he wouldn't," said another, "he's too prosy. But just to think of him having that nasty fellow, McConoghy, here—there would be no fear of him having any nice young man that people could look at. My! *a'nt* it provoking? I'm sure pa and he had *something* between them—let pa say as he

will—it a'nt for nothing he came to spend the evening! Did you see that book I was reading?"

"What book?"

"Why that *Fatal Secret*! I hope pa didn't get his hands on it."

"I shouldn't wonder if he had, for you left it here on the table this morning when you went out."

"I don't think he saw it, though," said Mary Clementina, "for I put it away."

"That's a darling! where did you put it? I want to finish it to-night, for we've got to return it to-morrow, you know, to the Library, and you two have it finished, but *I* haven't."

The book was placed in her hands by the younger sister, and, after mumbling over a few prayers, Sarah Eugenia half undressed herself, and, throwing a shawl over her shoulders, sat down at a small table near her bed to unweave by the light of a camphene lamp the mystic web which enwrapped the *Fatal Secret*.

A *Fatal Secret* it was to the Hackett family! That night, when the great city lay in hushed repose, the neighborhood was alarmed by the startling tinkle of the fire-bell from the next engine-house, and the cry of "Fire!" echoing along the deserted streets. People hurried from their beds, and ran to the windows to see where the fire was, and the sound of many feet was heard clattering on the flags; engine after engine swept along with lightning speed, each with its attendant train of yelling ragamuffins, and

the crowd and the engines and all the horrid din collected in front of Henry Hackett's door; and there was the so-late quiet and snug little dwelling all in flames, and the inmates rushing to and fro half dressed and only half awake, the girls trying to secure a few articles of clothing, and some small things that they could carry with them, their father and Michael to recover their shop-books and what little money they had had in hands. For some time hopes had been entertained that the fire might be extinguished without much damage to the house, and the firemen, touched with poor Hackett's wordless, heart-breaking sorrow, made every effort that skill and courage could dictate, but it soon became painfully evident that the fire was gaining ground, and in a very short time all hope of saving the house was abandoned, the question being then to prevent the fire from reaching the adjoining premises. This was happily accomplished, to the great relief of the Gallaghers and Fogartys, but poor Henry Hackett was left without house or home, or furniture, except a few articles of no great value. As for the store, it was gone with all it contained—his whole stock was swept away, and “not a penny of insurance on it,” as he mournfully said to Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Fogarty when they put the question to him. The girls had been taken in immediately by Mrs. Gallagher and her daughters, and made as comfortable as their misery would allow them to be made. But

for Sarah, in particular, there was no consolation—she kept wringing her hands and crying piteously, though she either would not or could not tell why her grief was so overwhelming beyond all the others, who were sharers in her misfortune. Her sisters were not slow to explain the why and wherefore. They told her plainly that it was all her doings, for that she had been sitting up reading after they had gone to bed and were fast asleep, and when one of them awoke some time in the night they found the room full of smoke, and the table she was sitting at and the book she had been reading all in a blaze; she herself was leaning back in her chair asleep, but it would seem as if some motion of hers had upset the lamp and the dangerous fluid igniting set all it reached in a blaze. Sarah's conscience testified to the truth of the accusation, and, contrary to her wont, she made no answer to the bitter taunts and reproaches of her sisters. The better qualities of her nature seemed called into action by this dread calamity, and no selfish thought was mingled with her sorrow. The only words that escaped her lips in all the agony of her remorse were, "My father! my poor hard-working father! he has lost all! he's left without a roof to cover him this dismal night."

"No, no, Sarah! don't say that," said Mrs. Gallagher kindly and tenderly (so true it is that misfortune is the touch-stone of character), "there's none of you without a roof to cover you while *we*

have one over us!—don't grieve so, my poor girl! it's not so bad as it might be, after all!—it's a great loss surely to your poor father, but still it can be remedied!"

Henry Hackett and his son could not be persuaded to leave the scene of the disaster till the last beam had fallen in and their house was a heap of smouldering ruins; then with a heavy sigh the poor father turned away, saying to his faithful Michael: "We may go now, Mike!—and look for a shelter!"

"It is not far off, Henry," said Mr. Fogarty at his elbow, "the girls are at Mr. Gallagher's, and you and Michael are *my* property. Come along in, for I'm sure you're in need of rest and refreshment."

"I'm obliged to you, Mr. Fogarty!" said Hackett in a choking voice, "it's just what I'd expect from you, and we'll thankfully accept your kind offer, but first we must go and see the girls. I'm afraid some of them was the cause of all this, but still there's no use flying in the face of God, or getting in a passion about it. I suppose it was to be, or it wouldn't be."

"Well! I'll go with you, for fear they'd keep you there, and I can't allow that."

When the girls saw their father and Michael their grief broke out anew, and it was a pitiful thing to see the father trying to offer consolation to them, when he needed it himself most of all.

"Well, girls!" said he, "it will do no good to

cry or fret now—what's done can't be undone, and if God was pleased to take so much of my honest earning away from us, He can give it back in His own time, if we only submit as Christians to His blessed and holy will. But how in the wide world did the fire originate?—I know it was in your room, but what was the cause of it,—that's what I'd wish to know."

Ann and Mary looked at their elder sister, and their father's eyes following theirs he was shocked to see Sarah pale as death, her eyes heavy and swollen, and she trembling from head to foot. She was evidently struggling with herself whether to speak or not. She looked around; all the Gallaghers and the young Fogartys and their father were in the room, and the crimson blood rushed to the girl's face, but happily she remembered the confusion of one greater than all the sons of men, confusion endured for her amongst others, and immediately strength was given her to confess her fault, and she said in a firm voice:

"Father, it was I that did it—the fault is all mine, and no one else must be blamed. I was sitting up reading, and fell asleep in my chair, and I suppose I upset the lamp somehow in my sleep; but I don't remember anything about it, and never even felt the smoke until Ann and Mary jumping out of bed woke me up. By that time the room was most all in a blaze."

"Poor child!" said her father kindly and in a tone

of compassion, "I don't blame you—I see you feel worse about our misfortune even than I do myself."

"I do, father," said Sarah in a husky voice, "I do feel it worse than you, and, with God's help, I'll never forget it."

And she never *did* forget it; from that night forward Sarah Hackett was a different girl, and through all the trials and difficulties her father had to encounter before he regained the ground he had lost, his eldest daughter was a comfort and support to him no less than his trusty Michael. One salutary change effected in her by that night's disaster was a horror of bad books, and nothing would ever after induce her to read or even to open one.

But things were not quite so bad with Henry Hackett and his family as people were apt to suppose. He had still his two thousand dollars in bank, and with that he started his business again a little farther up in the same street. Many kind friends pressed forward to help him with money or credit, but Hackett was a man that would never have another run any risk for him if he possibly could help it, and to borrow money without actual necessity was equally against his principles, so he cheerfully drew his little all from the bank, and having invested a hundred dollars or so in such articles of furniture as could not be dispensed with, he laid in what stock he could advantageously buy for the remainder, and went to work again himself and Michael as cheerily as though no reverse had

come to cloud his prospects. He was in the habit of saying that the comfort he had now in Sarah was worth all its cost, and that he would think it well bought even if he *had* lost all.

The fact was that Sarah helped considerably to retrieve the misfortune she had unwittingly caused. She would not hear of keeping a girl, and did the greater part of the work herself, not to speak of the sewing which she managed to get all done in the house, much against the will of her sisters in whom the old Adam was as strong as ever—stronger, indeed, from the bitter mortification they were daily obliged to undergo in the article of dress and other matters of equally paramount importance. They were very sore in regard to Sarah's new turn for Domestic Economy, a science for which, of all others, Misses Ann Wilhelmina and Mary Clementina entertained the most profound contempt. Experiments in that art were always dry and distasteful to them, even when the result was to be some savory dish or delicate confection. They never could be brought to take an interest in the fabrication of *puff* or any other paste—apple dumplings were their abomination, and puddings of all kinds were “the greatest bore”—only in the *making*, however, for the junior Miss Hacketts by no means disliked that part of the *pudding* which is vulgarly called its *proof*—to wit, the eating of it. Many a time they might have been told by Sarah, what Alfred the Great in his disguised state was

told by the herdsman's wife when he allowed her oaten cakes to burn: "You're better at eating my cakes when they're baked than you are at minding them when they're baking."

Amongst those who interested themselves most in helping Henry Hackett through his difficulties were the Murrays and Von Wiegels; they assisted him in various ways to extend his business, and sent him many substantial proofs of their good-will in the shape of valuable presents of furniture and other matters connected with the re-establishment of his household. Miss Von Wiegel, hearing from Michael of the very satisfactory change in his elder sister, took occasion one day to call with Alice and tell Miss Hackett by word of mouth how pleased they all were to hear of her commendable industry and devotion to her father's comfort.

"At the same time, Miss Hackett!" said the young lady when she and her friend rose to go, "at the same time, permit me to offer you this little token of my esteem which you will wear in remembrance of me."

"And of me *this*," said Alice Murray, and each of them handed a tiny parcel to the surprised and blushing Sarah, who chanced to be alone at the moment. She curtsied her acknowledgment; she could hardly find words to express what she felt.

When the ladies were gone and the parcels examined they were found to contain, Miss Von Wiegel's a valuable ring and brooch, Miss Murray's

two or three setts of French lace sleeves and collars worth several dollars. Sarah had still enough of girlish vanity remaining to be delighted with the costly gifts she had received, and we must do her the justice of saying that she valued them more as tokens of the approbation of two such ladies than even their own intrinsic worth considerable as it was. "If I had been still the vain, giddy, idle thing I once was," said she to herself, "it would be long before they would take such notice of me, and I'd live my lifetime maybe without getting any such presents."

She didn't say so to her sisters, however, for their mortification was bitter enough, and their spite no less so, when they saw the beautiful gifts Sarah had received, and what they thought quite as much of, the honor of a visit from Miss Von Wiegel and Miss Murray. Their father and Michael were delighted, and told Sarah that was what came of doing one's duty. Michael's reading enabled him to quote Shakspeare on that memorable occasion:

"Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in its head."



CHAPTER XIII.

ABOUT NOTHING—AND A FAMILY PORTRAIT.

It so happened that the *eclaircissement* promised by Miss Von Wiegel to her mother was postponed, if not longer than she intended, at least much too long for the natural anxiety of a mother under such circumstances. What rendered Madam Von Wiegel doubly desirous of knowing what Bertha knew of Major Montague was the awkward restraint which her uncertainty regarding him necessarily imposed upon her in her intercourse with him. With Bellew all was open as the day—she could talk with him as freely on every subject as though she had known him for years, but with Montague the case was altogether different. There was something about him that repelled any attempt at familiarity, and the old lady, herself as dignified and reserved as feminine gentleness and lady-like deportment would at all permit, felt little desire to lessen the distance between them. Still there was a perceptible difference in her manner towards him after she had heard from Bertha who he was. She made no advances, it is true, in the way of inviting familiarity, but she would sit and look at him through her gold-mounted spectacles, when she thought no one observed her, till the tears that welled up from

her heart dimmed her eyes, and her glasses, too. There was, moreover, a softened tone in her voice when she addressed him, though that was no oftener than usual, and when his voice reached her ear suddenly she would start, and, perhaps, glance hurriedly around as if half forgetting where she was. Once she said in a low voice to Bertha, as Montague sat conversing with Mr. Murray at a little distance, full in the light of a chandelier : “ My God ! what a dream is life !—with *him* before me I can forget one half my years !—such was his father eight-and-thirty years ago when we parted in anger to meet no more as—as friends. He was married soon after—and so was I.”

“ You loved him, mother ? ” whispered Bertha deeply interested.

“ Loved him !—yes !—why should I now conceal it—and from *you*, my child ? Lord Dunmore—or Harry Montague as he was in those days—was my first love, and wild and wayward as he was, and proud and passionate, I believe he loved me as only such natures *can*—with all his faults, Bertha ! I found it hard, believe me, to tear his image from my heart. I did, however, for your father’s worth commanded my respect, and his steady calm affection made me love him. Perchance I was happier with him than I ever could have been with Montague, gifted and fascinating as he was, but now when I look at his son, and see him just what *he* was, old memories come crowding on my heart, the

dreams of youth flit before my eyes, and the loved and lost are around me warm with the hues of life."

"But why did you and Lord Dunmore part, mother?" said Bertha in a painfully earnest tone.

"Because," said her mother speaking with evident reluctance, "because I found that he—he did not quite come up to my moral standard for a husband. I spoke to him of certain matters that had come to my knowledge, he was very indignant, and refused any sort of explanation. But Bertha, my dearest daughter! how is this?—how pale you are!"

"Oh! it is nothing, mother, nothing," said Bertha with a wan smile, "only a sudden faintness." And she bent her head over the scent-bottle her mother hastened to place in her hand.

"My dear Miss Von Wiegel! what is the matter?" asked Captain Bellew coming forward. "I fear you are not well."

"Quite well, Captain Bellew! thanks for your kind inquiry," said Bertha with forced composure; "my mother is answerable for the emotion that attracted your notice. She had been indulging more than is her wont in old reminiscences, and some of them affected me more than a little."

Mr. Murray said: "Pshaw! some of her old love-passages—I'll warrant your mother had lovers by the dozen in her time."

Montague arose and walked to the fireplace, where he stood for a few moments with his back to

the company, apparently examining the specimens of marble that formed a miniature obelisk on the mantel-piece. Thence he extended his attention to the portrait of the Ritter Von Wiegel, and at last approaching Bertha, said in a tone of perfect ease and self-possession :

“ I hope you feel quite recovered, Miss Von Wiegel.”

“ Perfectly so, I thank you, Major Montague !” was the cold reply.

He looked at her a moment, as if half inclined to say more, but, changing his mind, he turned to Bellew, and taking out his watch, said, “ I say, Bellew, what of *Lucia* ? you seem to forget our engagement for the opera.”

“ It were little wonder if I did in this presence,” returned the captain, bowing gallantly to the ladies. “ We have a Lucy Ashton here,” bowing again to Alice, “ who might have sat for the veritable Bride of Lammermoor, and, by-the-bye, Montague, now I think of it, Sir Walter must have had you in his mind’s eye—in *perspecto*, of course—when he drew the Master of Ravenswood. The name, too—*Edgar* !—by my honor, it is quite a coincidence. What think *you*, Miss Von Wiegel ?”

Bertha started, and looked somewhat confused. She had just been thinking how Edgar Montague would look and act and speak as Lucy Ashton’s lover, and, unconsciously, she had fixed her gaze on his dark, cold, and classically-correct features, as he

stood before her with his eyes cast down as if in thought. He looked up at the moment, and his glance fell on Bertha's face, as she faltered out, "I really have no opinion to offer."

"Save and except the trifling difference that I am rich and Ravenswood poor," said the major, "I accept the likeness, flattering though it be—but I would that *I* were Edgar Ravenswood and he Edgar Montague."

"What says our fair Lucy?" said the captain forcing a smile. There was a bitter meaning in his friend's words that reached his heart and made him sadder than he would wish to show.

Alice was looking up with something like childish wonder into Montague's face—she had never seen one like it in any degree, either in features or expression, and the language it spoke then was beyond *her* comprehension. She answered, as if in a dream :

"I don't know—ask *Bertha*!"

Every one laughed, except Montague and Bertha, and they looked at each other and smiled with strange significance. A shade of some feeling too deep for words passed over either face, but there was coldness, and something like defiance, in the momentary look they fixed on each other.

"Come! come!" said Bellew rather abruptly, "we are but losing time. Suppose we make a party and adjourn in full committee to the opera?"

"If the ladies will so far honor us," said Major Montague hesitatingly.

Mr. Murray had no objection. "Thank you," said Bellew, "we'll set *you* down on our first programme for Sir William Ashton."

Alice was delighted at the idea. Madam Von Wiegel declined, saying she had never been to any place of public amusement since her husband's death, but if Bertha desired to go she had not the slightest objection. "Indeed, I should be glad if you went, my dear!" she said to her daughter, "for your life is too much in-doors—too solitary by half."

"Do come, *chere amie*," whispered Alice, "you know I have hardly ever been to the opera," but Bertha only tapped her cheek with a smile of almost maternal affection, and said, turning to the gentlemen:

"I must beg you to excuse me. I could not think of leaving my mother alone."

Her mother declared she would not feel at all lonely, and begged her to go; Alice pleaded, and the old gentleman grumbled, but all in vain.

"I thank you, Captain Bellew, for your kind invitation," she said, in a tone that admitted of no further expostulation, "I cannot possibly join your party to-night. But surely, Mr. Murray, you will not, on that account, deprive Alice of the pleasure of hearing *Lucia di Lammermoor*?"

"I just will, then, to spite you," said the old gentleman very curtly; "if *you* don't go, neither she nor I shall go."

"In that case, I must only crave your and her for-

giveness," said Bertha smiling, "and do what I can to entertain you both, if you will stay and sup with us *en quartette*."

"It's easy seen that Bob isn't here," said Randal half pettishly, "if he were, I'll answer for it, you wouldn't be so ready to refuse."

"Poor Robert!" said Bertha, heaving a gentle sigh, "I wonder where he is to-night?"

"Is the lieutenant gone, then?" asked Bellew, slightly mortified by Miss Von Wiegel's cold refusal, but never long subject to any disagreeable feeling.

"Yes, poor Bob left us day before yesterday, and down-hearted enough he was, too—eh, Bertha? I hope you didn't say anything to damp his hopes when he came to bid you good-bye? Never mind, never mind; no need to blush so—we have all had such partings once in our day—eh, Madam Von Wiegel? Well, Bertha, my dear, I believe we *will* stay for supper—I wish you a pleasant evening, gentlemen."

"And you a pleasanter one, Mr. Murray! together with a good appetite!" said Bellew as they shook hands. "Good-bye, Miss Murray! I am little obliged to your fair friend for depriving our Ravenswood of his *Lucia*."

"*My Lucia!*" repeated Montague, as he coldly shook hands with Bertha, "my *Lucia* lives in dreamland—nor man nor woman can deprive me of *her* company!"

"Oh! of course, of course, *Vive la gloire* is your

motto—and a coy dame she is to woo, let me tell you!—well! come along, friend mine! *au revoir*, ladies!”

“Now upon your honor!” resumed Bellew when the two friends found themselves arm in arm walking down the avenue, “would you not rather remain and share the hospitality so gracefully offered to others than go to regale your ears on the heart-melting tones of Lucy Ashton’s love and sorrow?”

“You forget, my dear Gerald!” said Montague in a subdued tone, “that your friend is a most faithful votary of Apollo. Music hath charms, the poet says,

“ ‘To soften rocks and bend the knotted oak.’ ”

“Yea, verily, beloved,” said Bellew methodistically, “I own music hath charms, but there be charms greater still. Yea, even such as bound the Norman conqueror and laid him in chains at the feet of Egypt’s queen—such spells as Mary Stuart cast on the knights of France and the lords of Scotland.”

“Such glamory, too,” said Montague laughing, “as ‘the gypsy laddie’ of Scottish song threw over ‘the Earl’s lady’ when, almost without the asking, he wiled her away ‘from her own wedded lord’ to follow a gaberlunzie. Were such charm at my disposal there is a possibility that I might be tempted to show my power were it but for dear revenge; but you know, Gerald! I have long forsworn the dangerous art of love-making. My heart is sheathed

in triple armor you know full well, and every avenue leading to it closed against *la belle passion*. I have not forgotten the dear-bought lessons of the past, believe me I have not!"

"Whether or no, Major Edgar Montague! you remind me very much of a moth in dangerous proximity to a candle. The candle might safely lay its hand on its heart (supposing it had those useful organs) and disclaim all evil intent towards the moth, and that volatile insect might with equal sincerity declare upon its honor it didn't mean to scorch its dainty pinions, nor wouldn't either, being all over 'sheathed in triple armor.' Have I succeeded, Edgar! in pointing a moral?"

"Possibly you have, but your moral, luckily, does *not* 'adorn a tale.' You are complimentary, my good fellow! in your choice of an illustration. And *apropos* to that, what a *Lucia* you were kind enough to give me this evening!"

"Why? do you not think *la belle* Alice would make a passable Lucy Ashton?"

"I do not deny it; but Lucy Ashton herself, in all her fawn-like beauty and dove-like gentleness is not my *belle-ideal*. Much as you say I resemble the Master of Ravenswood I can only account for his wild passion for Lucy Ashton on the principle that extremes meet. I can understand the extent of his love and the form it assumed in such a nature under such circumstances, but I never could and never can conceive how one so highly endowed by nature could

waste such a treasure of love on a pale fair-haired girl of very moderate intellect. She was too fair and too fond to strike the deepest chords of *my* heart——”

“Too fond, Edgar ! how mean you ?—surely *that* would be no disqualification ?”

“It would, if it were too transparent. Beauty, half seen, is most captivating, and love, too plain and too demonstrative, loses half its charms. The spell we spoke of a little while ago has deeper and more subtle agencies than mere beauty of face and form. Even the instances quoted by yourself go to prove that : Neither Cleopatra nor Mary Stuart could have wielded such a power over the hearts of men—no, nor the Grecian Helen neither—were they not invested with other charms, totally distinct from *beauty* in its common acceptation. Yourself, my dear Gerald ! is it beauty or sprightly wit——”

“Both, Edgar, both !” said the captain gaily ; “I know what you were going to ask. But here we are at the omnibus that will take us to the temple of Apollo. And, by-the-bye ! you have managed to talk me out of a very serious purpose——”

“What was that, I pray you ?”

“*Not* to hear a dissertation on charms, I give you my word. I’ll tell you what, Montague ! you are many degrees too keen for my poor wits.”

“Your wits are keen enough, mine honest friend ! if you would but rub them up occasionally !”

They were now in the omnibus, jammed up as

generally happens, with the oddest mixture of age, sex and condition, so conversation was at an end—for which one of the gentlemen at least was by no means sorry.

Between leaving the stage, however, and entering the Academy of Music, Bellew contrived to blanch the major's cheek by saying in a whisper: "That was an unkind cut, was it not? about 'Black-eyed Susan?'" She touched a sore part just then!" He affected to laugh, however, and whispered in the same tone as they approached the ticket-office: "They jest at scars who never felt a wound. Well for those who have no sore spots to *be* touched—no festering wounds for such dainty practitioners to probe?"

Meanwhile Mr. Murray and the ladies were apparently intent on a game of loo, though a close observer would have seen that each one was occupied more or less with some thoughts or fancies of their own. Even Randal's fine old face was graver than its wont, and Alice, though she smiled occasionally at some petulant exclamation of her father's when the game was going against him, was evidently inclined to the pensive mood. Bertha, at length noticing the preoccupation of the others, made an effort to shake off her own anxious thoughts, and, suddenly threw down the cards with a laugh which she meant for gay, saying:

"There!—who likes may have the pool for me and welcome. I am much of the opinion of the sage old

moralists of the Spectator, that "it is very wonderful to see persons of the best sense passing away a dozen hours together in shuffling and dividing a pack of cards, with no other conversation but what is made up of a few game phrases, and no other ideas but those of black or red spots ranged together in different figures."

"There is much truth in the remark, Bertha, my dear," said Randal Murray, "and yet see how men, and women, too, can give up their hearts to the influence of these same black and red spots, and devote the energies of their being to that very *idea* which your author satirizes so keenly!"

"Self, my dear sir! self is at the bottom of that *idea*," said Madam Von Wiegel; "that eager longing for success in all things which spurs men on to the wildest deeds of daring, and renders them proof against the hardest privations. Is not life itself like a game of cards, when we come to think of it?"

"Not a doubt of it," said Mr. Murray, drawing his chair nearer the fire, which the chill April evening rendered very acceptable. "We have our trump cards, and our honors, and our shuffling, and dealing; and, though we have the lead of an odd time, we don't always take our dealing trick. Now I thought Bob had turned up a trump in *his* game of life." He fixed his eyes abstractedly on Bertha, then slowly added, "but I almost begin to fear the boy didn't play his cards well—eh, Bertha?"

Bertha blushed a very little, but she answered quite composedly :

"To carry out your allegory, Mr. Murray ! I think Robert has scarce commenced his game. I know not that he will ever be a scientific player, or a very cautious one, but, in the affairs of life, if not at cards, a bold and careless player often commands brilliant success. Robert's horoscope is not yet cast," she added, looking thoughtfully into the fire before her, "but the stars are bright in the house of his nativity."

"And your horoscope, my fair astrologer ?" asked Mr. Murray rather more earnestly than a jest would seem to warrant.

"Mine?" said Bertha, in a dreamy voice, and without looking up, "mine?—how should *I* know ? But I feel—I feel as though the clouds were parting over my head, and the shadowy future forming into shape."

Her large soft eyes were fixed on vacancy, and she evidently forgot that she was not alone. The color faded gradually from her cheek in the intensity of her own thoughts, till she looked like the sculptured image of some artist-poet's dream.

Mr. Murray and Alice watched her with wondering eyes, but her mother only smiled sadly, and whispered : "Be not surprised—there is, at times, a tinge of mysticism in her mind, that comes, I suppose, from her German lineage."

"What did you say, my dear mother ?" said

Bertha, recalled to consciousness, or rather to recollection by the sound of her mother's voice.

"I was telling our friends, my dear, that you are somewhat given to fits of abstraction at times."

"I'm glad to see you safe back in the world of reality, Miss Bertha," said Mr. Murray in his natural manner; "would it be making too free if I asked who was your companion in your late journey to the moon?"

"I decline answering the question," said Bertha with a smile so sweet that the old gentleman's good humor was more than restored.

"Well! well!" said he, stirring the fire with great energy and activity, "I suppose it was 'on eagle's wings' you went aloft, like my countryman, Daniel O'Rourke, of lunar celebrity. But we were talking of stars just before you started for Madam Cynthia's domain—what aspect do the heavenly bodies wear to-night?"

"They are misty as the ghosts of Ossian's warriors," said Bertha, laughing, "even the 'star of the west' has withdrawn her 'shadowy splendor,' but General Mars, I am happy to say, smiles fiercely down in all the glory of his zenith. That argues well for our young soldier, does it not?"

"I'll tell you what, now, Bertha!" said Mr. Murray, turning short on her, "I think Bob's 'particular star' belongs to the *terrestrial* globe, just now, not the *celestial*—not 'all the planets as they roll' can decide *his* fate, poor fellow!"

"Mother," said Bertha, avoiding the earnest gaze which Alice fixed on her, "mother, you have often promised to tell me the story of that pale, melancholy girl whose portrait, hanging in a dark corner of the library, has excited my curiosity ever since I have been here. I am sure Mr. Murray and Alice will be glad to hear a story from you; and it is just the time to tell it, as we four sit like the Monks of Kilcrea, if not 'by a bog-wood fire,' at least, by a very cheerful substitute for that patriarchal flame. I will turn the gas down almost out of sight," and rising she suited the action to the word, "a story of the dead told by gas-light reminds me of a venerable ruin daubed with whitewash or yellow ochre."

Mr. Murray and Alice expressed themselves most anxious to hear the story, and Madam Von Wiegel acceded with a grave smile.

"It is a sad story," said she, "that my daughter will have me tell. Neither is it a story of every-day occurrence, God forbid it were! As it is almost the time for which I ordered supper, I will make my narrative as brief as possible. That will do, Jan." The major-domo had been putting fresh coals on the fire, which operation was accompanied, as usual, by a most tremendous clatter. "Now go down, and tell Betty to serve supper in half an hour."

"Yah, madam!" and Jan vanished, very slowly though, as Bertha and Alice remarked one to the other.

"The young girl, my dear Bertha, whose pictured

semblance has, you say, attracted your attention and excited your curiosity, was, at one time, the heiress apparent of this house with all its appurtenances. She was the niece of Wolfred Von Wiegel, your great uncle, and her name was Ulrica De Menzel. She was an orphan of noble descent, on the paternal as well as maternal side—her mother was Adelaide Von Wiegel, the only sister of Wolfred, and, of course, your great-aunt, Bertha! Now it so happened that this young lady had a lover who followed her from Deutchland, and, though barely tolerated by her uncle or his wife (they were a childless old couple at the time) contrived to keep himself on a footing of intimacy in the family, owing to the nervous fears entertained by the uncle and aunt that any positive insult to him would be resented by their spoiled darling as worse than a personal affront to herself. Indeed the young man—his name was Otto Lehman—was so amiable and so accomplished that his evident poverty was the sole pretext the old couple could possibly advance for denying him their countenance—or what they considered of far more importance—Ulrica's presence, which they saw clearly was to him the sun of life and the blossom of hope. Independent of his poverty, however, there was another objection to Meinheer Otto, which rendered him still less acceptable to the worshipful Wolfred and his stately old wife: he was not a Catholic, and, worse still, he was nothing, as regarded religion. He was

a fair specimen of those dreamy German rationalists who resolve all religion into the coldest and most visionary abstract, not even the shadow of a shade. Unluckily he had succeeded in transfusing some of his own wild theories into Ulrica's brain, which was, of itself, somewhat tinctured with a morbid fancy for the unreal. The girl was fair, as you may perceive from her portrait, and, being the reputed heiress of the Von Wiegel property, suitors for her hand were not wanting. One of these, a young Englishman, a merchant of high standing in New Amsterdam (as our good city was then called), was formally received by the old couple as the future husband of Ulrica, on whom they laid their commands to smile graciously on his suit, under pain of forfeiting all right to their inheritance, and being sent back to her dismantled castle by the Rhine, there to dwell with owls and bats amid the dreary shadows of broken walls, and the drearier shadows of departed ages. Awed by this threat, it was supposed, Ulrica *did* smile on the fair-haired Briton, gave her uncle and aunt to understand that *she would soon consent to become a wife*, and Otto came no more."

"Dear me, Madam Von Wiegel!" cried Alice Murray, "did she give him up?"

"No, no," said Bertha with striking emphasis, "I know she *could* not—dare not give him up!"

Madam Von Wiegel smiled sadly and went on: "Easter time came round, and her aunt would have had Ulrica go to confession and make her paschal

communion—she excused herself on one pretence or another till the great festival was past—on Easter Tuesday morning she was missing from the breakfast-table—after waiting awhile, her alarmed relatives had her room-door forced—she was not there—the house was searched with no better success, but it chanced that the library was overlooked. Towards evening, Wolfred Von Wiegel went thither to pray that some light might be thrown on the cause of Ulrica's mysterious disappearance, and lo ! in a high-backed arm-chair near one of the windows sat his orphan niece—dead and cold as a block of marble. A smile was on her face, a cold, ghastly smile, and a miniature was clasped in her death-clenched hands—it was that of Otto Lehman ! On a small table near lay an unsealed note, containing only a few faintly-traced lines, which read as follows : ‘ I said I would soon consent to become a wife—I have kept my word, *as I meant it*—Otto and I plighted our faith to each other this night—here in this very room,—while night's dark mantle covered the earth ; and the light of the tomb was our star of love. *Apart* we could not live, *together* the fates forbade—seek to know no more. This, however, you *must* know, for if I played the hypocrite during life, death shall expose the truth ! I never *was* a Catholic—I never *was* a Christian, at least in your sense,—the great unseen was my deity—the mighty spirit of the Universe, of which my own soul is a part—Otto was the incarnation of that sublime idea—he was the genius of my

fate,—call it good or evil,—as I was of his. No more for time or eternity of her who was

ULRICA.’”

“Merciful Providence, what a death!” cried Bertha, pale with horror. “Mother, knowing all this, how *can* you keep the unhappy girl’s picture in our library?”

“It has hung there so long, my dear, as a family portrait, that I, not being a Von Wiegel myself, would feel a certain reluctance in having it removed. For myself I never look at it without a shudder—yet still the sight of it conveys a solemn lesson on the priceless value of *faith*, the happiness of leading a Christian life, and the danger of giving the rein to human reason, without the guidance of divine faith.”

“But, dear me, Madam Von Wiegel!” exclaimed Alice Murray, “what became of the *genius*? was he ever found, dead or alive?”

“Or was he accountable for the lady’s death?” asked her father.

“That I know not, Mr. Murray, but I have heard my dear husband say that a young man answering the description of Otto Lehman made his appearance a year or so after in the old castle of Ulrica’s family, amongst the vine-clad hills by the Rhine, where he had been employed years before in teaching the young daughter of that impoverished house, the polite learning of the age. There he lived a lonely man, shunning and shunned, practising occult and forbidden arts as the simple Rhenish

peasants believed, and there, after a few years, he was found in a dying state, already speechless, by some wild fellows who had made a bet with their companions that they would pay the conjurer, as they called him, a visit in his den."

"Supper on the table, madam!" said Jan, opening the door.

"Upon my honor, I'm glad to hear it," said Mr. Murray, rising with alacrity, and offering his arm to the old lady; "that story of yours has all but given me a fit of the ague."



CHAPTER XIV.

AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY—AND A WEDDING.

ABOUT a month or so after the fire at Henry Hackett's, when Michael and his father were busily engaged "putting things to rights" in their new store, who should drop in one evening but John McConoghy. It was not his first visit since Henry's great misfortune, for he had been an active and efficient friend during the dreary days immediately following the disaster, but on this particular occasion he seemed in such remarkably good humor—so exuberantly happy, as it were, that Henry Hackett could not choose but notice it. The first thing John did on entering the shop was to shake hands, and such a shake, with Michael, across the counter, with the highly-appreciative remark that he (Mike) was a regular trump, and no mistake! Michael smiled knowingly, and nodded sagaciously, but said nothing, as there were some persons in the store at the time. When they were served and gone, Henry said with his quiet inward laugh!

"Well, Mr. McConoghy! what's on foot now? I see you're as merry as a cricket."

"And why wouldn't I be merry, Mr. Hackett? And what's more, *you'll* be merry, too, (for all that's come across you,) when I tell you. And, indeed,

you have a right to be well pleased, for that son of yours is one of the cutest and brightest chaps of his age in New York City."

"I'm obliged to you, Mr. McConoghy, for your good word of Michael," said the fond father with much and very natural complacency; "the boy's well enough, thanks be to God, and to tell the truth of him, he's a good, obedient child as any father need wish to have. But what's your news?"

"Have you been to Taylor's?" said Michael with a waggish look from under his brows.

"Have I? I guess I have, Mike! though the ladies didn't know I was there till I chose to bring myself under their notice—when it suited myself. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Well! don't you want to hear the secret now?"

"Secret!—ah! you young—I don't know what to call you, for I wouldn't like to call you anything bad," and he shook his fist good-humoredly at Mike, who was looking as demure as an owl. "The secret's no secret now, and it's all up with *them you know*. I'll go bail they'll keep clear of 66 for the time to come."

"Well! but how was it?—how did you manage?" inquired Michael.

"For goodness' sake, what is it?" exclaimed his father, "whatever it is, you have it all to yourselves."

"Never mind, Henry, never mind! we'll not be long so. Husht! here are people coming in."

"Better wait," said Henry, "till we close the

store—it won't be long, now, and then you can come up-stairs and smoke a cigar."

"Agreed!" said McConoghy, taking his seat on a large tea-chest that stood near.

The store being closed, our trio adjourned, as per resolution, to the sitting-room on the floor above where the three sisters were variously engaged, Sarah with her stocking-basket beside her, darning woollen socks, Ann reading a suspicious-looking book with a flaunting yellow cover, whilst Mary was playing over, or trying to play, the last new Polka.

The young ladies last named were terribly "put out" by the presence of the stocking-basket afore-said, and one of them made a sign to the other to remove it *presto, prestissimo!* To this Sarah would by no means consent, quietly laying her hand on the obnoxious article, and telling Ann in a low voice that *she* thought no shame of its being where it was.

After the necessary inquiries relative to health, and the customary observations on the state of the weather, a momentary silence ensued. Henry Hackett, supposing that McConoghy might not care to speak out before the girls, told them to leave the room for a little while for that he and Mr. McConoghy had a word to say in private.

"If it's on account of what I'm going to tell you," said the latter gentleman, "there's no occasion for them to go—I'd as soon they'd hear it as not."

This intimation of a secret being in the wind placed the young ladies on the alert, and they all fixed their eyes on John's good-looking face with an expression of eager curiosity.

"Well!" said McConoghy, not at all insensible to the importance of his position as a narrator, and clearing his throat vigorously once or twice, "well! you remember, Michael! you laid it on me as an obligation to take the Miss Gallaghers—or have them taken—to Taylor's Saloon, some evening. At the time I had little hopes that I'd be able to succeed, for I wouldn't on any account ask them myself; howsomever, I said to myself, faint heart never won fair lady, so I'll see what can be done. I turned it over and over in my mind a good many times, but I could see no other way of working the packet except to tell Tom right straight out how the matter stood. I did so, and I declare to you he jumped at it like a fish at a bait—he was so tickled at the notion of tricking the wife and daughters, though he knew no more than I did myself what dog was in the well. We both agreed that it was best for me to keep out of sight, but be near at hand till we'd see how the joke went. Well! one evening after tea, Tom says to his wife, as innocently as could be: 'What do you think, Ellen, if you and the girls would come out for a walk, as the night's fine?' At first, the proposal was not very graciously received; the girls murmured among themselves, and made wry faces behind the parental backs. They had about

made up their minds (or rather *guessed* they had) that it wasn't worth the trouble of dressing 'just to go out for a walk with pa and ma,' but their mother, I suppose, thinking the walk might lead to some desirable purchases, gave them the wink, and forthwith they were all unanimous in accepting the invitation. Tom knowing right well the answer he'd get, asked them at the door where they'd like to go to—'Oh! where but to Broadway?' says one, and 'where but to Broadway?' says another, and, to be sure, the ladies were all for Broadway; so over to Broadway we went—the Gallagher's ahead, and myself some yards behind—and down Broadway we marched in the same order, till we—or rather they—got to Taylor's Saloon, at the corner of Franklin street, and, to be sure, Tom would have 'Ellen and the girls' go in and rest themselves and have some refreshment, and, to be sure, they jumped at the offer, and in they went, and in I went after them, and squeezed myself into a corner where *they* couldn't see me (though I could see *them*) on account of a big, brawny Western Hoosier that I managed to have between me and the ladies. You may be sure I had my eye on them, wondering all the time what the deuce Michael Hackett could have sent us there for. While I was cudgelling my brains about that a smart young waiter came to the table where I sat with some ice-cream for my Western neighbor, and I could scarce keep from crying out in surprise, when his eyes and mine met—amazing discovery! I saw

before me the highly-esteemed Mr. Green, who seemed anything at all but pleased at the meeting, and made his exit in what soldiers call double-quick time. But alas! the Gallagher family had seen him, too, and I could hear Ellie's voice quite plain: 'Ma! for pity's sake look there!' I was sorry for her in one way, but in another, I was not, for I knew it was all her own fault—so I thought I'd have *my* share of the fun, and over I went to where they were sitting, and down I sat myself, right opposite Tom, and asked the ladies if they wouldn't *have* something. No, they thanked me, they had had some ice-cream and didn't wish anything more, and I could see they were wishing *me* anywhere else but where I was—Tom and myself had our own fun of it, I tell you, watching the nervous tremor that the ladies were in for fear the Green Knight might make his appearance in their vicinity. While they were straining their eyes looking for *him*, up comes another gentleman to the next table, in white apron and round jacket, with a towel under his arm, and in his hands a tray, on which were tastefully arranged two mugs of the universal *lager*, two plates of oyster stew, two ice-creams (as the waiters say), and a large plate of cake. But it wasn't the odd mixture of eatables and drinkables on the tray that attracted *my* eyes, or Tom Gallagher's either, and I guess it wasn't *our* eyes that made the gentleman in the white apron blush like a full-blown peony, and come as near dropping tray and all and taking to his heels, as a body

could without actually doing it. I heard Miss Ellie on one side and Miss Mag on the other, giving a groan that you'd think was out of a pit, and Miss Gallagher said, loud enough to be heard all round: 'Why, ma! I declare if that a'nt Mr. Brown!—Mag, why don't you speak to him?' 'Oh! you hard-hearted thing!' said Miss Mag between her teeth, 'if I don't be even with you for this!'—'I guess we'd best be going!' said Mrs. Gallagher putting on her gloves, and the girls all made a move, except Fanny, who, it was plain, enjoyed the fun amazingly, and thought, if she did not say it:

“ ‘Twill nebber do to gib it up so, Mr. Brown,

‘Twill nebber do to gib it up so.’

‘Why, what’s come *over* you all?’ says Tom, winking at me; ‘why don’t you finish your ice-cream?—it’s paid for now, and there’s no use leaving it after you?’ ‘Of course, pa, we must finish it,’ said Fanny; ‘why you’re taking nothing, Mr. McConoghy!’ says she, the next word, turning to myself, and I protest I was most struck dumb with surprise, for, to the best of *my* knowledge, it was the first civil word Miss Gallagher ever spoke to me—I managed to find voice, howsomever, to tell her that I had taken all I wanted before I happened to get sight of them, but was entirely obliged to her for asking. ‘Get up this minute,’ said the mother across the table to Fanny, in a low voice, ‘don’t you see myself and the others are ready to go, and it’s just working contradiction you are. Get up, I

say ! Tom ! what are you about ? ' I'm about moving, Ellen ! come along now ! ' ' My goodness, ma ! ' said Fanny in a loud whisper, as we all stood up to go, ' wouldn't Mag and Ellie like to say *good-bye* before they go ?—it's cruel to take them off so—a'n't it, pa ? a'n't it, Mr. McConoghy ? ' The last-named individual was so overpowered by this second honor conferred on him that he hardly knew which end of him was uppermost, and can't for the life of him tell what answer he made, or whether he made any. I rather think the Miss Gallaghers, especially Ellie and Mag, could not give any better account as to how they got to the door, for they looked as if they thought every eye in the room was on them (and that was a good many)—they weren't, though, for every one there was too busy, either eating and drinking or picking their teeth, to pay much attention to what was going on elsewhere, and besides no one knew, probably, or even guessed, except ourselves, that there was such a nice little secret connected with two of the very nice young men who were comforting their inward men (and women) with *Lager bier* and all the *etceteras*. Even if they had surmised what a serious hoax had been played on the Gallagher family, they might not have been so much surprised as the inhabitants of more old-fashioned cities would have been, for such things are too common in our fashionable society to make any great sensation."

Mr. McConoghy paused to take breath, and, pro-

bably, to allow his auditors to indulge their merri-
ment, if they felt inclined thereto.

"Well! well!" said Henry Hackett, holding up his hands in admiration, "we needn't wonder at anything we hear after that!"

"And that's what they found my gentlemen at!" cried Ann. "Waiters in a saloon—my! I'm so glad!" echoed Mary. "What an impudent pair of fellows!" said Sarah, "I'm real sorry for the Gal-laghers—they were so kind to us in our trouble! How bad they must feel to be taken in so!"

"Well!" said Michael, with sly meaning, "what do you think of the fool's errand now, Mr. McConoghy?"

"Think, Michael? what do I think of it?—why I think this, that you're a great little fellow all out—and to show you how well pleased I was at the come-down you were the means of giving the ladies' foolish pride I went into a store in Broadway before ever I got home and bought you this—I know you're fond of books!" And so saying he handed Michael a History of the War of Independence, the sight of which made Michael's eyes sparkle, for such books came rarely into *his* possession. His father was as much delighted as himself, but they both said it was too much for Mr. McConoghy to give or Michael to take. Their grateful apologies were cut short by John.

"Don't mention it, now, don't, I beg of you, Mr. Hackett!—I have taken a liking to Michael, and if I live and get along as well as I'm doing, I'll give

him a lift that will serve him—I can tell you Tom Gallagher is almost as thankful to you as I am, Michael, and he'll tell you so himself. But where was I in my story—or did I tell it all?"

"No, no, you did not tell us what they all said when they got out——"

"Oh! that's easy told; Fanny burst out laughing, and began to repeat poetry for them:*

" 'I saw him, Lucy, only once, as down the lighted hall,
We moved to music playfully, a stranger to us all;
A stranger with a pale white brow, and dark and meaning
eye,
Which flash'd like lightning on my own, whene'er he passed
me by.

* * * * *

" 'He press'd my hand at parting, and to-night he will be here,
While pa is at his game of chess, and ma is nowhere near;
Excuse me, dearest Lucy, now indeed I cannot write,
To-morrow I will tell you more, he will be here to night.

P.S.

" 'Oh! dearest Lucy, pity me, I really think I'm dying,
My heart is like a heart of lead—my eyes are red with
crying;
But yesterday the bank was robbed, and of a large amount,
My father caught the robber, and, oh mercy!—'twas my
Count!"

"Fanny kept talking on in the same strain all the way home, to the great amusement of her father, though he didn't venture to laugh out, and her mo-

* I will not vouch for the fidelity of Mr. McConoghy's memory on this notable occasion. I therefore supply any possible deficiency on his part.

ther having a pretty good idea that she was somewhere in the same boat with Mag and Ellie, kept very quiet, and just let Fanny say what she *had* to say, though at another time she'd have put a stopper on her mouth pretty quick. 'And, to be sure, we must have a party for them!' said Fanny, in a voice loud enough to reach the ears for which it was meant, if not of the passers-by. 'And we must go to the opera with them, and post ourselves in a front box, too! for fear we mightn't be seen with our stylish *American-looking beaux!*' Flesh and blood couldn't bear this, so Mag and Ellie turned on their unsympathizing sister, who was declared by her mother a Job's comforter. 'I'll tell you what it is, now, my good lady!' said the high-mettled Mag in a decidedly menacing tone, 'you've gone about far enough for *this* time—you'd best not provoke *me* any farther!' 'She may talk now,' said Ellie, 'when things have turned out so different from what they had ought to, but she'd have set her cap at Green or Brown as soon as any of us, only she didn't happen to take their fancy—ahem!' This was the last I heard of it," proceeded John, "for, as I told you, I left them on Broadway and went in to get the book for Michael. I forgot to tell you, though, that if I didn't go home with the Gallagher family it wasn't for want of a very warm invitation, not only from my friend Tom but from Miss Fanny herself, but I thanked them kindly and bid them good-night. The truth is, Mr. Hackett, that I have seen too

much of the young ladies, and I begin to think that Miss Fanny, being a very splendid individual, wouldn't answer for a plain man like John McConoghy to jog through life with."

Whether by accident or design, Mr. McConoghy's full, clear eyes rested on Sarah as he thus wound up his narration, but Sarah either was, or appeared to be, too intent on what she was doing to take any particular notice of what direction his eyes took.

The two younger sisters, and even Michael in his own peculiar way, made quite merry over the fall of the splendid castle which the Gallagher girls had been building in the air, and John McConoghy quite won their hearts by the active part he had taken in demolishing the ærial edifice. Mr. McConoghy, on the other hand, seemed to feel himself quite at home, and by the time he had taken a glass or two of punch, the spirit of which, as Mr. Hackett assured him, was genuine Irish whiskey, his heart expanded after the manner of Irish hearts under such genial influence, and he drew his chair over to Sarah and began to compliment her, first, on her industry, next, on her good looks, and finally, on the possibility of her being a fit and proper person to take upon her the style and dignity of Mrs. John McConoghy.

Sarah blushed and smiled, but there was no embarrassment or emotion of any kind in her voice or manner as she listened to this "flattering tale" told not by *hope* but by John McConoghy. Then she

managed to put it off with a laugh, as though taking it for a joke, and so she said laughing :

"I'm much obliged to you, Mr. McConoghy ! for your good opinion, but as for the other matter, I hope you don't despair of Miss Fanny. I think you're just on the high road to success in that quarter."

Mr. McConoghy, in reply, protested with marked energy and determination that a ring he'd never put on a Gallagher's finger, unless his mind changed, which he did not think it would.

He soon after took his leave, and then the girls began to teaze Sarah on her new admirer, whom they declared "not half so bad as they used to think him."

Sarah smiled and suffered them to run on till they had exhausted their topic, then they began to yawn in concert (as people generally do), and their father told them they had better go to bed and be up early. The latter suggestion was evidently not much to their liking, but the former they adopted and carried out immediately. They asked Sarah wouldn't they wait for her, but she said it would keep them too long, as she had a good deal to do yet.

When the younger sisters had retired, Henry Hackett sat a few moments silent with his eyes fixed on vacancy, then all at once starting from his reverie addresséd his daughter as follows :

"Sarah, I think Mr. McConoghy is in earnest about that, though you passed it off for a joke."

"In earnest about what, father?" asked Sarah very demurely.

"Come, come now, you know as well as I do."

"Well! I don't know that I do, father!—do you mean about Fanny Gallagher?"

"No, but I mean about Sarah Hackett!"

"A'nt she a sly bit of goods, father?" said Michael.

"Not quite so sly as some of my neighbors—eh, Michael?"

"Well! but, Sarah dear," said their father, "wouldn't it be a fine match for you, supposing he *was* in earnest?"

"Perhaps it might, father, but then——" she stopped, and looked down at her work.

"But then what?—have you any objection to him?"

"I can't say I have——"

"In the name of Goodness, then, why do you talk as if you had?"

"Maybe she has a notion of somebody else, father?" suggested Michael in a tone half jest half earnest.

"Nonsense, Michael! who would she have a notion of?"

"Well, that's more than I can tell," said Michael, "but I know one that has a notion of her—don't I, Sarah?"

Sarah dropped her work, and looked Michael steadily in the face, her cheek dyed scarlet. The arch intelligence of Michael's smiling glance put her all in a tremor.

"See there, father!" said the droll fellow, pointing to his sister's burning cheek, "didn't I tell you?—Sarah, may I tell father who it is?"

"Do, Michael," said his father who began to feel rather anxious on the subject of Sarah's agitation.

"Well, silence gives consent," said Michael, "so I suppose I may speak—it's Edward Fogarty, father." Henry Hackett felt quite relieved, and the good-natured smile came back to his face—of late more haggard and care-worn than its wont.

"Fie! fie! Michael," stammered his sister, rising as if to put away her work, "how can you say such a thing?"

"How can I say it?—why, because I know it's true——"

"And how do you know it, Michael?" said his father.

"He knows no more about it than the man in the moon—so don't mind him, father!" put in Sarah.

"Well! there's no saying but the man in the moon knows something about it too," said the waggish youth; "they say lovers *do* take him into their confidence at times—whether or no I can't say, but I know I have it from Edward Fogarty's own lips that he has loved our Sarah ever since the night of the fire, and that if he don't have *her* for a wife he'll never have any."

"Oh! you shocking bad boy!" said Sarah, "a'nt you ashamed to talk so?"

"Sarah!" said Henry Hackett in a very serious

tone: "Has Edward ever spoken to you on the subject?—I'm in earnest, now, and I expect a plain, straightforward answer."

"Well, father! when you put a question to me in that way, I must tell you the truth. Edward *has* spoken to me many times about—about—that matter."

"And what do you think of it?"

Sarah looked down at the matting on the floor. and the color mounted from her cheeks to her temples.

"I think you needn't ask, father!" said Michael with his quiet laugh, "her face tells the story, and I don't think her tongue will tell it much plainer. At any rate, I'm going to throw myself into the arms of Morpheus."

"Morpheus! who is he, Michael?" asked the father, not unwilling to give Sarah time to recover her composure.

"Why, the god of sleep, to be sure!"

"The god of sleep, Michael! dear me! I didn't know there was such a god in heathen times. I often heard of Bacchus, the god of wine, and Venus, the goddess of beauty——"

"And Cupid, the god of love, father!" put in Michael with a sly glance at Sarah.

"Oh! to be sure, and Mars, the god of war——"

"And Mercury, the god of thieves?"

"Why no, Mike, no! I never heard of *him*—do you tell me there *was* a god of thieves?"

“And to be sure there was!—why wouldn’t there be a god of rogues and roguery as well as a god of drunkenness, and a goddess of unclean vices? Don’t you know it was the devil they were all worshipping in those days, and how could he be better worshipped than under the names of the seven capital sins?”

“I declare, Michael! you’re doing well at the classics!” said his father with a fond smile.

“Why, of course, I do the best I can, if it was only to show my gratitude to the dear ladies that are giving me the opportunity of advancing myself. Every time I go, either Miss Von Weigel or the old Madam, whichever I happen to see, is sure to ask me how I’m getting along with my master.”

“God bless them every day they rise!” said Henry, taking up his little night-lamp, “it was the lucky day for us all that they came to know *you*, Michael!—and if ever you get forward to be ordained, it’s them, after God, you may thank for it.”

“And his own good sense and good talents, father,” said Sarah with an affectionate glance at her brother, “only the ladies saw something in him past the common, they’d never take such an interest in him, or pay a master to come to the house to teach him.”

“Well! after that, I think I may go,” said Michael darting out of the room, and so ended the conversation.

It was not many days after that when Edward

Fogarty, the second son of William H., came to ask Sarah Hackett in marriage. A fine young fellow Edward was—manly, honest and independent, with as much good sense in his well-formed head as would furnish half a dozen fashionable ninnies (commonly called *coxcombs*) with *their* allowance of brains. He was anxious to get along in the world, and set about it in the right way, having gone while a mere boy into a merchant's office down town, and there worked his way upward, till he now enjoyed the fullest confidence of his employers, and was chief salesman in their warehouse, with a very handsome salary in possession, and a junior partnership in perspective. Sober, steady, intelligent, and most assiduous in the discharge of his duties, Edward Fogarty was just the young man to rise in any business or profession, and as Henry Hackett told him with tears of joy in his eyes :

"I know you're a good son and a good brother, Edward ! and I'm sure you'll make a good husband. If I was looking out for a husband for my dear Sarah, I couldn't find one more to my liking—and though I'm her father, I must say for Sarah that she'll make you a *good wife*. I can say that now, with my hand on my heart, but I couldn't say it two years—or even one year ago !"

"I know all that, Mr. Hackett !" said Edward with a frankness that well became him, "and to tell you the truth, I wouldn't have thought of Sarah for a wife at the time you mention. As it is, I know her

worth, and her past follies ought not to be remembered. They were girlish follies, after all, and serve by contrast to enhance the sterling virtues which were only for a time obscured. But you have made me very, very happy, Mr. Hackett! by giving your consent, and now I will arrange the rest with Sarah."

"But your father and mother, Edward! have you consulted *them*?"

"Certainly I have, Mr. Hackett, and they are much pleased with my choice. Though I *am* a young American," he added laughing, "I am not quite so young-Americanish as to take so important a step *without* consulting my parents, and having their consent, if possible! *John Smith and Father* is not the order of things in our family."

"Nor you don't honor your father with such titles as 'the governor'—'the old man,' or 'the old fellow'—nor your mother as 'the old woman,' or 'the old dame?'" Edward shook his head with mock seriousness. "Hut, tut, man! you're behind the age in your house—why you're regular old fogies in there!"

"Not so old as you may think," laughed Edward, "we're as fond of amusement, I can tell you, as any family in the city; the only difference is, that *we* enjoy ourselves better when we're all together, which, I'm sorry to say, isn't the case with all families in New York—even of our own acquaintance. However, they have their ways and we have

ours. Well ! good-bye, Mr. Hackett ! I'll see Sarah some time this evening."

A month from that day, Sarah became the happy wife of Edward Fogarty, but the wedding was very private, without either ball or reception, and Sarah could not be prevailed upon to wear anything more expensive on her bridal day than a Swiss muslin dress, white crape bonnet, and white Stella shawl. Her sisters were terribly mortified, but she only laughed and told them that Edward was better pleased to see her in that costume than any other she could have worn.

"Yes," said Edward, coming in at the moment, "you forget, girls, that

"Beauty when unadorn'd, is adorn'd the most."

Who that loved Sarah, as I love her," he added, regarding her with a smile of tender affection, "could wish to see her on her wedding-day encumbered with tawdry finery ? That face and form require no aid from dress or ornament. Nature has made them what *I* would have them—the trappings of vanity would but disfigure them."

The girls were still unconvinced, but a trip to Washington and some other Southern cities, in company with the bride and groom, "smooth'd away the wrinkles" from their fair brows.

Madam Von Wiegel and her daughter, with Mr. Murray and Alice, did Sarah the honor of going to Church to see her married, and each of them gave

her a marriage-present of one kind or another when they called at the house to offer their congratulations.

On their return from their Southern tour, the young couple took up their residence for the present at Mr. Fogarty's, at the special request of Mrs. Fogarty, and with Sarah's full consent.



CHAPTER XV.

THINGS IN GENERAL AND SOMETHING IN PARTICULAR.

"WHY, my dear Bertha! you look fresh and fair this morning!" said Madam Von Wiegel as she took her seat at the breakfast table about a week after we left her going down to supper with Bertha and the Murrays; "Queen Mab must have favored you with *songes couleur de rose* last night."

"I cannot say my dreams were so pleasant, mother!" said Bertha with a smile, "but I was up very early this morning—you know it is the 1st of May—the first day of the Month of Mary—so I made it a point to hear Mass, and the long walk in the fresh balmy air has, very likely, given my cheek some of the rose-tints of other days. But what note is that, mother?"

"It is from Captain Bellew—desiring to know if we will permit him and Major Montague to have the honor of accompanying us this afternoon to the National Academy of Painting—the annual exhibition is, you know, open, and our friends are desirous of paying it a visit before they leave New York.

"Mother!" said Bertha in a tone of quiet decision, "mother! I may as well tell you at once, what I ought to have told you before, that I will not go anywhere in company with Major Montague until——"

"Until when, my dear?"

"Until I have asked him a few questions—and received satisfactory answers," she added with some hesitation.

"Why not have asked them before now, Bertha?"

"Because, mother! a suitable occasion has not offered—they are questions that I cannot put with propriety, unless he himself introduce the subject, and I know not that he will."

"Bertha, my dear daughter!" said her mother earnestly, "when am *I* to have those promised revelations?"

"Before this week is out, mother!" said Bertha smiling; "be *my* suspense long or short, yours must end. Do you like the flavor of this Soochong?"

"Not so well as that delicate Young Hyson, if I dared indulge in it with safety to my nerves. But remember, Bertha!—let me see—this is Tuesday——"

"I shall not forget, mother! Before Saturday night the *Ides* shall have come—and gone!" she added in an under tone, as if speaking to herself.

Both mother and daughter were silent for some time, then Madam Von Wiegel said, but without raising her eyes: "Bertha! there is one thing I should like to know without delay, if possible—did Robert Murray——"

"Declare his intentions," said Bertha, laughing as she finished the sentence. "Well! I suppose I am bound to answer frankly, mother, when you ask me so seriously. He did."

“When?”

“The evening before he left.”

“I thought so. And what answer did you give him?”

A faint blush stole over Bertha's cheek, and a shade of sadness clouded her beautiful features. “Mother!” said she, speaking in that half-abstracted tone which denotes deep and earnest thought, “it may be that I was wrong to say it—so decidedly—but I told him I could never give him more than a sister's love, and with that he must be content.”

Madam Von Wiegel's countenance fell. “And what was his reply, Bertha?”

“Why, he tried to persuade me that—that I did not know my own mind with regard to him—I assured him I did perfectly, and begged him to continue no farther a conversation that gave me pain—poor Robert!” she added with a sigh, “he bowed and made no answer, but sat looking at me a moment or two with his heart in his eyes, then rising, he held out his hand, and as he raised mine to his lips, he said in a voice that I shall not soon forget: ‘Bertha, farewell! God grant you may never have cause to regret this moment—may you never learn from dear experience the value of one true heart!’ He was gone before I could collect my thoughts to speak, and I have never seen him since.”

“My heart echoes his parting prayer, Bertha!” said Madam Von Wiegel, the tears running unheeded down her aged cheek; “Robert's love is

green and fresh as Spring's first blossom—his heart is unspoiled by the world's deceitful wiles, and I know that heart is all yours—his father, too, and Alice have been building such hopes—oh Bertha! how could you so crush the hearts that love you?"

"I cannot—could not help it, mother!" said Bertha in a voice that trembled with emotion; "I never gave Robert any positive encouragement—you know I did not?" Madam Von Wiegel shook her head sadly, and then changed the subject to one of less harrowing interest. She did not choose to ask why it was that Bertha could not *help* refusing Robert—she had a misgiving that it was somehow connected with the particulars she was so soon to learn, and she, therefore, said no more on that topic.

As early as etiquette would permit Captain Bellew called at Rheinfeldt House to know whether the ladies were going to the Exhibition. He saw Madam Von Wiegel alone, and she told him, with a polite expression of regret, that as her daughter did not seem inclined to go, she had only to thank Captain Bellew for his kind attention.

"Another disappointment!" muttered the captain, and his frank, handsome features were clouded for a moment. It was only for a moment—the next he was smiling as brightly as before, and begged to assure Madam Von Wiegel that there was no apology required. "Of course when Miss Von Wiegel does not feel *inclined* to go"—there was the slightest possible curl on his full rich lip as he said

this—"we cannot hope for an honor which I need not say, my dear madam ! would have been a very great pleasure to us. Our stay in New York is about drawing to a close, and we are, of course, anxious to see what progress the arts are making under Brother Jonathan's paternal care before we leave. Having heard you say, madam, that you intended going to the exhibition some day this week, we hoped that our attendance might have been agreeable——"

"And so it would, Captain Bellew ! very agreeable, indeed—but——"

"But the Fates forbid it, madam !" said the captain with his sunny smile, holding out his hand at the same time. "Well ! good-bye, Madam Von Wiegel ! I shall do myself the honor of calling again before leaving—unless Jan should chance to turn crusty and refuse to open the door. Good-bye !" and away he went, laughing merrily at the latter conceit, and saying to himself as he hastened down the avenue to join the major whom he had left, as he said, to "walk his lonely round" in the vicinity of the outer gate, "I shouldn't wonder, now, if Miss Bertha 'inclined' next time to refuse us admission."

"Well, Gerald, how have you succeeded?" asked Montague, stopping in his march, when his friend issued from the gate.

"I've been flatly refused——"

"On what grounds?"

"Miss Bertha does not seem inclined !—I beg the

lady's pardon," added Gerald, a slight degree of vexation visible in his tone and manner, "but I have no patience with these feminine airs!"

"Feminine airs!" repeated the major with melancholy significance, "you forget the old proverb, Gerald! *think twice before you speak once!*"

"Well! I didn't exactly mean what I said in *this* case—though positively, Edgar! I begin to think that there is no daughter of Eve entirely free from those same 'feminine airs'—but, confound it! let that pass!—did I ever think I should live to hear my fastidiously-elegant friend, Major Edgar Montague, the observed of all observers, 'the mould of form,' if not quite 'the glass of fashion,' condescend to quote an old proverb?"

"And why not, Gerald? we surely cannot afford to despise 'the collective wisdom of ages.' Let me observe, on the other hand, that *I* as little expected to hear my universally-favored and entirely amiable friend, Captain Gerald Bellew, venting any degree of spleen against the fairer portion of our race. What an anomaly—only think!"

"Deuce take them!" said Gerald in a tone midway between jest and earnest—perhaps nearer the latter than the former, "I say no more, my good friend, than their best friends have said of them:

" 'Oh! woman, in thine hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please.' "

"Now, that's just what *I* meant, too—it's the con-

founded uncertainty attending them that makes all the trouble."

"Yes, but in justice, my dear Gerald! you should have finished that stanza," said Montague with his calm smile, and *he* immediately added:

" 'When pain or sickness wrings the brow,
A ministering angel thou!'

You see the great master gives both sides of the picture in those four lines—he tells you, as *Hamlet* does his mother:

" 'Look upon this picture—and on that' "

"Well! well! that is not the question, now, my dear major!—you take this matter very lightly, it seems to me, considering it in all its bearings.'

"Lightly! why surely, Gerald! it is not, after all, of such serious import?"

"Not to *me*, undoubtedly," said Bellew pointedly.

"I should think not, indeed," laughed Montague. "However, I have news for you, mon ami!—look here, and cease to wonder at my falling back on the collective wisdom, or any other wisdom that might help one through a dilemma."

He pointed to something in the *Daily Tribune* which he had been looking over during the captain's short absence.

"I don't see anything here to put your wits in requisition," said Bellew after a momentary glance at what he took for the part indicated.

"Look at the arrivals by the last Havre packet."

"Ha!" Bellew's cheek paled, then flushed again, as his eyes fell upon two names in the list of arrivals, and when he looked up again a tear was trembling in his eye.

"My poor friend!" said he, and taking his hand he squeezed it hard, hard.

"I thank you, Gerald!" said Montague with a quivering lip and a faltering voice, "I know what you would say, and I feel it, too—I feel it here," laying his hand on his heart. "I feel that while you are near me I am sure of one sympathizing friend—a friend who knows me as I know myself."

"And perhaps a little better," rejoined the captain, with an effort to recover his usual ease. "But, I say, Edgar! what strange chance is it that has brought them hither—and at such a time?"

"Strange chance!" repeated Montague, with bitter emphasis, "as well ask why Brutus met the shade of Cæsar at Philippi. I was told once '*we shall meet again*,' and my evil genius has traversed half the earth since then—I believed that thousands of miles were still between us, yet here we are in the same city on this bright May-day morning when the sunshine revives the germ of hope in the dreariest human heart. Oh Gerald! true friend, dear friend, where is hope now?"

Bellew laid his hand on his friend's shoulder and pointed upwards to the blue sky. Then with a sudden change of manner, he said cheerily: "Come, come, my dear major! let us dismiss the subject—

for the present, at least—you cannot have forgotten the great truth that

“ ‘To bear is to conquer our fate!’ ”

“Bear!” repeated the major with that lofty self-reliance which was, indeed, part of his character, “did you ever suppose, Gerald Bellew! that I would shrink from any fate that may befall me?—of course when I say *fate*, I use it in the sense that you do yourself—not as the irrevocable decree of Omnipotence, which in this case would be a blasphemous idea—men often make their own fate,” he added thoughtfully, “aye! and shape their own fortune, and then throw the blame on a fore-ordaining Providence. Passion—prejudice—rashness or indiscretion, will sometimes change in an instant the aspect of a whole life—yes, rear a gloomy fortress for one’s own heart to pine in evermore, or a palace of delight that will make this earth a heaven——”

“Cry you mercy there,” said Bellew, well pleased to see him diverging somewhat from his previous line of thought, “I was in the habit of thinking that there is no true happiness to be found on earth. Any scheme of felicity we may build on the geological basis of earthly hope will be pretty certain to topple down about our ears when we least expect it, if it do not entirely dissolve in air, like that whilom owned by our childhood’s friend Alladin. But, I say, Montague! what think you of our young lieutenant?”

“What lieutenant do you mean?”

"Why, Lieutenant Murray, of course!"

"As how, professionally or otherwise?"

"Why, otherwise, to be sure!"

"I am not prepared to answer *that* question," said Montague with a smile of doubtful meaning; "the boy is well enough, as his worthy progenitor might say if you put the question to him."

"He soars high, for a stripling—does he not, Montague?"

"Pshaw! he scarcely knows the height of his folly," was the sarcastic answer, and the two friends stepped into one of the Third Avenue cars to ride to the Astor House, where they meant to lunch before going to the Exhibition.

They had just ascended the steps, when in the portico they met a tall, straight old gentleman in a black Quaker-coat, scrupulously white cravat, and narrow, high-crowned hat, which rested rather than lay on the top of a carefully-dressed brown wig. Kid gloves of faultless fit were on the gentleman's hands, one of which held a gold-headed stick—the proprietor called it *a cane*, either because the word *stick* is not a very euphonious one, or because such as it is, it conveys an idea of support, which necessarily implies weakness of body or limbs, and that implication was, for reasons known to himself, particularly distasteful to Sir Henry Burke.

Our friends would willingly have passed him, but his old eyes were as sharp as their young ones, and he accosted them with a stiff but very polite bow.

"Major Montague and Captain Bellew?" he inquired. The two officers bowed assent.

"I am very glad to meet you, gentlemen! very glad, indeed," said the ancient beau—"I saw by the morning papers that you were staying at the Astor House, and I did myself the honor of calling as soon as I possibly could."

"The honor was to us, Sir Henry!" said Bellew speaking for both, "but who on earth would have thought of seeing you in New York?"

"Ha! ha! I thought you would be surprised," said Sir Henry with a little shrill laugh; "would you believe it that two weeks ago we were in Paris, planning an excursion to—I'm not sure whether it was to Arabia or the Holy Land—to visit the tomb of the Prophet or the tomb of the Saviour—both, I dare say—when all at once, after reading some letters one morning—you know how extensive her ladyship's correspondence is—Lady Susan took it into her head to come to America—and lo! here we are!" He wound up with theatrical emphasis.

"I see you are as active as ever, Sir Henry!" said Montague, feeling it incumbent on him to say something.

"As active as ever! yes, and *more* active than ever—how else, think you, could I keep flying round and round the globe with such an erratic planet as Lady Susan? Why a man of less activity, and less energy of character would have succumbed long ago, and been laid to rest in the shade of the Pyramids,

or," he added sentimentally, "by the blue Italian sea where Petrarch's mournful shade looks forth from Pausilippo's height. Only think, gentlemen! what an enviable lot to be laid for aye in a spot sacred to poesy and love, my grave bedewed by the tears of beauty!"

"I heartily wish you were there now, beauty and all!" politely said Bellew in an under tone, whilst Montague drew himself up with more than his wonted reserve.

"What did you say, Captain Bellew?" inquired Sir Henry, "I am a little—a very little—hard of hearing, at times."

"As if we didn't know that!" muttered the captain again with a furtive glance at his friend. "I asked you, Sir Henry! when did you arrive?—ahem!"

"Late last night, my dear sir, late last night—you see I lost no time, but, of course, Lady Susan has no idea I came now—if she had, she would by no means consent. You know how she stands on her dignity, especially with young fellows—a class of persons for whom, by-the-bye! she entertains a sovereign contempt!" And the superannuated beau smiled with an extra degree of suavity as though to convey the assurance that Lady Susan's sovereign contempt for the more juvenile lords of creation was not at all shared by Sir Henry Burke.

It was no easy matter to get rid of this original knight banneret, without inflicting a very deep wound on his sensitive vanity, but whilst our two soldiers

were casting about in their minds how they could courteously effect their escape, Sir Henry unconsciously helped them out of the dilemma, by remembering all at once that he had promised Lady Susan to be back in an hour to lunch, and it was positively five minutes past the time. With a hurried good-bye he took his departure, hoping for an early renewal of the pleasure he was then compelled to terminate so abruptly.

“A good morning, gentlemen!” Sir Henry took off his hat and bowed with the stiffness and formality of the old *regime*.

“Good morning, Sir Henry!” and the two friends found themselves under the necessity of raising *their* beavers to return in due form the *Louis Quatorze* salute of the accomplished knight.

“Confound him for an antiquated fop!” cried Bellew as he and Montague traversed the spacious hall together, “he always reminds me of Beau Nash, though wanting his sense and spirit——”

“But to hear him speak in the same breath,” said Montague, “of visiting the Holy Sepulchre and the tomb of Mahomet—surely a man of his years ought to manifest some degree of reverence for what the whole Christian world regards as sacred—the visible link between the seen and the unseen, the finite and the infinite—the standing proof of man’s dearly-purchased ransom! The tomb of the Prophet, indeed!—shame on the man’s gray hairs!”

“I wonder would it be any harm to wish,” laughed

Bellew, "that the fossil beau was suspended from the magnetic shrine of the Prophet—that is to say the mortal part of him, after Lady Susan has trotted the life out of his old body. He is such a sight-hunter when living, it strikes me he ought to be made a sight of himself when his spirit has winged its way to realms unknown."

"Fie! fie! Gerald!" said his graver friend, though he laughed too, "does Catholic faith permit jesting on the soul's mysterious passage to eternity?"

"Good, upon my honor!" said the gay captain in a whisper; "you know what was said of the Norman Geraldines of old in Ireland—*Hibernes Hiberniorum*—I think *I* may say of my honorable and gallant friend, *Catholicus Catholicorum*—but, I say, Edgar! why don't you come out?"

"*I bide my time!*" was the major's curt reply, as they entered the *salle a manger*.

About three o'clock on the following afternoon our friends were walking up the nicely-pebbled avenue to Rheinfeldt House, Bellew, as usual, free and easy, Montague silent and thoughtful.

"Why so silent, friend Edgar?" demanded the captain as they neared the steps; "are you ruminating on the possible contingencies of our approaching Indian campaign—picturing to yourself, perchance, the hair-breadth scapes and thrilling adventures to be encountered amongst the tiger-haunted jungles of Hindostan?—seriously now, this

order to join our regiment on its way to India is rather unseasonable—is it not?"

"How unseasonable, Gerald? is not the soldier's life made up of such surprises, and he is ill worthy the name of soldier who would murmur at the order to meet his country's foes?"

"*Our country's foes!*" said Bellew with unwonted seriousness, "where are *they?* not in India, assuredly, or yet in China? Ah, Edgar! it *is*, after all, an anomalous position, that of Irish gentlemen drawing the sword in England's quarrel—riveting those chains on other nations which weigh so heavily on our own."

"Why, Bellew! you seem to forget that you are a British officer," said Montague with a half smile.

"I do *not* forget that I am a British officer," responded Bellew, "nor shall I, while I hold her Majesty's commission, but I cannot forget, and do not wish to forget, that I was an Irishman and a Catholic before I *was* a British officer." His hand was on the bell as he said these words, and in a moment Jan's imperturbably grave visage presented itself in answer to the summons.

"Are the ladies at home, Jan?"

"Yah, meinherr, they're in the green parlor." The green parlor was opened accordingly and the gentlemen ushered in. Madam Von Wiegel greeted them with her usual kindly courtesy, but Bertha merely acknowledged their salute and bent her eyes

again on a paper she had been reading. The gentlemen exchanged meaning glances.

"You seem much interested in that paper, Miss Von Wiegel," observed the captain. "May I venture to ask is there news of the —st U. S. Infantry?"

"Not that I am aware of, Captain Bellew!" said Bertha with quiet composure, but without raising her eyes.

"Well, we have had news this morning of our gallant —th."

"Indeed?" asked both ladies simultaneously. "And of what nature?" continued the elder.

"Nothing very particular," said Bellew gaily, "except that the regiment is under orders for India, and we to join it at Malta by the end of the month."

Montague turned his eyes on Bertha—she was still looking at the paper on the table before her, but there was a deep red spot burning on either cheek, and a tremulous motion about the lips that told of some inward emotion deeper perchance than words could express.

At this moment a loud ring came to the hall-door and Jan made his appearance with "a lady wants to see Madam or Miss va-ry per-tick-lar."

"Where is she, Jan?" said Bertha, rising.

"I showed her into the parlor."

Bertha stepped lightly across the hall, perhaps wondering who the lady could be, perhaps thinking of the Indian insurrection, and the possible share the —th was to have in its suppression, or perhaps

of some great item of news, that had riveted her attention in the morning paper—at last she opened the parlor door and walked in. A middle-sized lady of rather genteel appearance and dressed in the tip of the fashion rose to meet her, which she did with consummate ease.

“Good morning!” said Miss Von Wiegel, “pray be seated!”

“Thank you! I shall be going presently!”

Miss Von Wiegel knew not what to say, so she waited patiently.

“I called, madam! to show you some specimens of a new article just invented (my husband holds the patent) for taking stains or grease-spots out of silks, velvet, cotton or woollen goods, carpets, hall-papers, mahogany or rosewood furniture, also extracting ink or other stains from marble slabs or mantel-pieces,” &c., &c. Her taper fingers all the while engaged in “undoing” a small parcel, which being “undone” gave to view a very small box containing the universal specific for the extraction of grease-spots and all other defilements. Bertha, seeing clearly that the speediest way to get rid of the accomplished soap-vender was to buy some of her merchandise, did accordingly make a small purchase, without any great faith, truth to tell, in the ‘new article’ of which the lady’s husband held the patent. She then rang for Jan to show her out, and returned to her company in no very good-humor with American “institootions,” one of which she recognized in the fashionably-at-

tired and entirely self-possessed female whose spurious pretensions had imposed on Jan so far as to be ushered by that official into the parlor. Miss Von Wiegel could not help laughing (provoked as she was by an interruption so ludicrous) at the one grain of consolation that presented itself to her mind: "The President's wife or any other great personage in the land may be visited in her drawing-room at any moment by this, and a score of other, lady-pedlars."

With this thought uppermost in her mind Bertha entered the opposite parlor with an amused expression of countenance, and Montague when he caught her eye, so far misinterpreted its meaning that he smiled scornfully—at least so Bertha thought—and turning to Captain Bellew, said in a tone of careless ease: "I think, Bellew! you are forgetting our proposed visit."

"It seems your memory is more retentive, Major Montague," observed Bertha carelessly. He looked at her and smiled, but made no answer.

"I thank you, major! for reminding me of what I really *was* forgetting," said Bellew starting up at once.

"If your visit—whether of business or of pleasure—could be postponed till to-morrow, gentlemen," said Madam Von Wiegel rising, too, "I should be much pleased to have you stay for dinner. We dine at five," and looking at her watch, "it is now half-past four."

"Shall we make the sacrifice?" questioned Bellew gaily of his friend, "or—let the visit go?"

"The latter we cannot do," said the major with his cold, calm smile, "our time in New York, you know, is counted, we may say, by hours!"

"True," said the captain, but yet——"

"Will you spend the evening with us, then?" asked the lady of the house.

"With the greatest pleasure, Madam Von Wiegel"—"If we possibly can," replied the two gentlemen, one with frank cordiality, the other with stately courtesy.

"We must not be too selfish, mother!" said Bertha with a mocking smile and a contemptuous curl of the lip that were only caught by one pair of eyes; "we have really had more of the gentlemen's company than, under the circumstances, we had a right to expect," and she bowed them out with a freezing civility that utterly astounded Captain Bellew.

"I say, Montague! can your flesh and blood bear that? Upon my word and honor, mine can't! Endurance, like other virtues, may be carried too far. If you catch me again within range of her ladyship's fire, my name is not Gerald Bellew! I tell you she has no heart, Edgar Montague! and you may find that to your cost with all your boasted stoicism!"

Montague's answer was lost to his friend's ear, for they both turned at the moment, hearing some-

body puffing and blowing in hot pursuit. It was Jan, and they stopped till he came up.

"Well! Jan, what's the matter?"

"Meinheer Major—I mean Montag—Monta-gue!" said he putting a small parcel in the hand of the gentleman so indicated, "Miss Bertha's compliments with this!" And Jan moved away almost as hastily as he came.

Impatient to see what Miss Von Wiegel had sent with so much dispatch, Montague unfolded the parcel and saw—a handkerchief marked with his own initials. He put his hand in his pocket—his handkerchief was there, and a deep flush crimsoned his cheek and brow.

"A handkerchief!" said Bellew in surprise; "what does that mean?"

"Why, it means that my memory is not always so good as Miss Von Wiegel seems to suppose."

"Oh! you forgot your handkerchief!—I protest I thought it was a parting gift."

"It may serve for that, too," laughed the major, and there the matter ended for that time.



CHAPTER XVI.

A WEDDING—GOING TO SARATOGA, AND WHAT'S IN A NAME.

MRS. GALLAGHER and her daughters were in no enviable frame of mind, as may be supposed, after the discovery at Taylor's. Peace was utterly banished from the house, for one was throwing the blame on another, and it was nothing from morning till night but hinting, and cutting, and bitter recrimination. Tom himself was the only one that maintained his wonted equanimity, for as he had had no share in the Green and Brown humbug, and had never given those gentlemen of color any sort of encouragement, so the general discomfiture of the family gave him very little trouble. Indeed, if truth must be told, Tom was rather pleased than otherwise, that Green and Brown had turned out as they did, hoping that the lesson might not be lost on his better (though certainly not wiser) half, and the girls. Poor Tom Gallagher! in his honest, manly independence and guileless simplicity of heart, he little knew the hold that vanity and its cousin-german "toadyism" have on the hearts of some, and his own family amongst the rest. So let him dream, in blissful ignorance, till sad experience tears the veil from stern reality. The great object of anxiety to the feminine portion of the household was to

keep their ludicrous disappointment from the ears of their acquaintances. McConoghy being the only actual witness, they applied themselves to conciliate *him*, in order to induce him to keep the secret. Mrs. Gallagher went so far as to request Tom to speak to him about it, and urge upon him the disgrace it would bring on the whole family if the story got abroad.

"You know, Tom dear!" said she, "we'll be the laughing-stock of the city—at least the girls will, and they're the worst——"

"The city, indeed!" said Tom interrupting her; "much the city knows about *our* affairs!"

"Well! well! you know I don't mean the whole city, but every one that knows us even by name. I tell you, Tom, you *must* speak to McConoghy, and get him to say nothing about it to any one—if you don't we'll be ruined out and out, that's all, and need never show our faces anywhere!"

"Well! I'm sure you took pains enough to show your faces everywhere with Mr. Green and Mr. Brown," remarked Tom; "so you can hardly expect the thing to be kept secret—besides all the people that used to meet them here, and see you and the girls making so much of them, will be for finding out what's become of them. I don't see any use there is in saying anything about it to McConoghy."

"I tell you there *is* use," said Mrs. Gallagher emphatically, "and you must do it—that's all about it, now!"

"Very good," said Tom, "if I must, I must!" And he walked away with his good-humored smile, perhaps a little malicious on that occasion.

Fanny, it must be confessed, was very active all this time in that ungracious domestic avocation vulgarly called keeping the house in hot water. Unlike her father, she did not attempt to conceal her satisfaction at the *denouement* of the Green and Brown affair, and she certainly let no opportunity slip of sending it home to Mag and Ellie. In her mother's presence, she had grace enough to avoid the obnoxious subject, after receiving a formal and not very gentle prohibition from the maternal progenitor; but when her mother's back was turned, she made her tongue and temper ample amends for the restraint put upon them. Annie and Janie were not slow to take advantage of so good an opportunity for teasing Mag and Ellie, and were quite willing to do their part in keeping the ball (of discord) hopping, as the old phrase has it. It is hardly necessary to say that Mag and Ellie, being girls of spirit, did not keep their mouths shut on such occasions, so that every room in No. 66, from garret to cellar, was occasionally the scene of a nice little vocal tournament between the several daughters of the house of Gallagher, during the two or three weeks supervening on the memorable visit to Taylor's.

All this time Fanny was secretly buoying herself up with the assurance that McConoghy was ready to her hand whenever she chose to give him the

degree of encouragement necessary for popping the question. But McConoghy was not forthcoming on all occasions for the exercise of Miss Gallagher's condescension; his visits began strikingly to resemble those of angels as described by the poet, being decidedly "few and far between," whereat Miss Fanny wondered exceedingly, and Miss Ellie and Miss Mag rejoiced beyond measure, telling their elder sister with more truth than politeness that "McConoghy was too old a bird to be caught with chaff, and was going off to pick up grain elsewhere."

Miss Fanny's own misgivings took the same direction, but of course she took the best of care not to say so, contenting herself at first with a sly smile and a peculiarly significant nod, as much as to say: "Talk as you will—I know how *that* stands!"—as time wore on, however, and the days of McConoghy's absence glided into weeks, the "nods and winks and wreath'd smiles" one by one disappeared, and Miss Gallagher's ordinary reply to any sisterly inuendo, or open taunt concerning the missing individual, was a highly contemptuous toss of the head, which, being interpreted, meant "much about him!—as if I cared where he goes!" By Mag and Ellie Mr. McConoghy was declared "a gone coon," as far as sister Fan was concerned.

Things were in this state at No. 66 when the news of Sarah Hackett's approaching nuptials came upon the young ladies and their mother with stunning effect—quite an electric shock to the whole circle.

Now Edward Fogarty—the best-looking and most gentlemanly of the three brothers, would have been a desirable match for the most fastidious of the Miss Gallaghers, and that tattling gossip dame Rumor had more than once given broad hints that some of them *were* setting their caps at him—a manifest fib as regarded the caps, though perhaps true enough as to the setting—but however it happened, Edward always managed to keep a civil distance with the Gallagher girls, and had been known to say more than once that if it were not for Tom himself he would never set foot in the house; moreover, that Tom was worth a ship-load of the wife and daughters put together. But this was, of course, under the rose, and was not positively known to the Miss Gallaghers, though they might possibly have suspected some feeling of the kind on the part of handsome Edward Fogarty.

What, then, must have been their chagrin and mortification when assured beyond all possibility of doubt that Edward was soon to lead to the altar of Hymen their former next-door neighbor, Sarah Hackett, a girl who had neither fortune nor position like the Miss Gallaghers. Sarah Hackett of all people!—that hadn't a dollar to get!—why, to the Miss Gallaghers' knowledge—and this galvanic shock amalgamated them all again—Sarah Hackett never had a dress on her back that cost over seventy-five cents a yard!!—the Hacketts indeed! why they never gave a party in all their life, and were hardly

ever at one!—well! strange things were coming to pass, that was certain!

“’Tis strange, ’tis passing strange, ’tis wonderful!”

But alas! ‘’tis true, and pity ’tis, ’tis true.’ Let fashionable people wonder ever so much at Edward Fogarty’s odd taste, there were the facts staring them full in the face that the day was appointed, the bridal dresses in the hands of Miss Waldron, and the wedding-cake ordered—they really didn’t know but what the ring was bought!—yes! yes! to be sure it was, for Edward Fogarty was seen by no less a person than Lil Smith in a jeweller’s shop in Broadway. These preliminary facts duly verified, the Misses Gallagher and C^o. speedily arrived at the conclusion that Edward Fogarty was *no great things after all*—if he wasn’t an odd fish, and a very odd fish, too, he’d never have thought of taking Sarah Hackett—every one knew that, and for the reason that ever since she set the house on fire she was a regular dowdy, a perfect old grandmother! On these and other such premises, the young ladies of that vicinity grounded their verdict as aforesaid, and proved to their own apparent satisfaction that there was nothing to regret on their parts in the pending matrimonial alliance between the Hacketts and the Fogartys. Nevertheless, they all showed more anxiety to see how the wedding would go off than an affair of so little importance would seem to warrant; sundry visits of (covert) inquiry were made to Miss Waldron with a view to ascertain what sort

the dresses were to be—what the bride was to wear—whether Anne and Mary were having silk dresses, and if so, what color, &c., &c., &c. But Miss Waldron, as our readers may remember, was a very sagacious individual, with quite a large share of those valuable qualities prudence and common sense; she had little desire, therefore, to gratify the itching ears of our fair news-hunters, and being fully on her guard against their prying curiosity, sustained the cross-examination so well that the several visitors left her dwelling little the wiser for their visit, much dissatisfied with their scant measure of success, and in very bad humor with “that provoking Miss Waldron.”

When it became known that no invitations were issued for the wedding, the murmurs of discontent burst at once into a storm of indignation, mingled, of course, with contempt. It was declared on all hands that it was “real mean of the Hacketts”—but, then, what better could be expected?—everybody knew what *they* were, and so forth, *ad infinitum*. Now this was hardly fair on the part of the Gallaghers, at least, seeing that when they had a wedding at their house, the Hackett family were not honored with an invitation, next-door neighbors as they were.

The Gallagher ladies were still suffering from the double and treble wounds inflicted by the transformation of Sarah Hackett into Mrs. Edward Fogarty, when their Sister, Mrs. Samuel C., in her great sis-

terly kindness, presented them with a little nephew, and in due time, of course, with a grand christening. This event, with the bustle and excitement attending thereon, and the no small importance of having such a novel affair to manage, entirely drew off the young ladies' attention from the wedding, and (for the time being) all other sublunary concerns. The very naming of the child was a matter of all-absorbing interest, and was not decided upon until a family council was called for the momentous occasion, from which council was formed a special committee, consisting of the lady members of the united families. The young father had intimated a wish that the boy should be called Thomas-William, in honor of the two grandsires, but this proposition was contemptuously set aside, and after long and earnest deliberation (on the part of the ladies, as before indicated), the infant scion of the house of Fogarty was presented at the baptismal font, and thence taken bearing the imposing patronymic of Herbert-William-Thomas-Samuel Fogarty. Some would have had George-Washington superadded, but this was overruled, and the name stood as above on the baptismal register.

The delightful bustle attending the christening of Master Herbert W. T. S. Fogarty was scarcely over when Mrs. Gallagher and her three eldest unmarried daughters set out for Saratoga, the preparations for that great event having been for some three or four weeks previous progressing in the skilful hands of

Miss Waldron, aided by her efficient staff of more juvenile practitioners in the art *modiste*. It would but weary the reader to enumerate the contents of the numerous trunks, packing-cases and handboxes (the latter made to order by the tinsmith), that were conveyed to Saratoga from the residence of Mr. Thomas Gallagher, all duly marked in very conspicuous characters, by the careful hands of Atty Garrell, "Mrs. T. Gallagher, United States Hotel, Saratoga." Suffice it to say that in those repositories of fashion there were *robes de chambre*, *robes de matinée* (worn as breakfast dresses in fashionable life), dinner-dresses, evening-dresses, walking-dresses, sleeping-dresses (why not?), together with basques, sacques, overskirts, hats (meaning bonnets), and gipsy flats (meaning hats) in any number, all of the rarest and most *recherché* materials in their several kinds. Then there was a brace of boxes of French kid gloves, assorted colors, and a valuable stock of laces and pocket-handkerchiefs, with all the other costly trifles that go to make up the toilet of a New York fashionable lady.

Much serious discussion arose as to whether the carriage and horses were to be taken or not, but against that Tom set his face *in toto*, and planted his foot firmly, too, on the ground of opposition, saying with his usual good sense that the ladies might do for a few weeks without the carriage, and that it would be a ridiculous thing for them to be taking it with them all the way to Saratoga, and the iron-

grays and Peter into the bargain. At first there was some grumbling on the part of the girls, and Mrs. Gallagher herself seemed hard to convince that the turn-out must be left at home.

"Dear me, Ellen!" says Tom at last, "how would you do if you hadn't it at all? Maybe if you had it with you, it's what you'd be getting it put on the hotel-books, as they say one of our New York moneyed men did a few years ago at Rockaway. Wouldn't it read well on the books: '*Mrs. T. Gallagher, New York, five daughters—man-servant, carriage and pair of horses?*—eh, Ellen?"

Tom's laugh was not echoed by his wife or daughters—they were too angry at the notion of being compared to such an ignoramus as the moneyed man aforesaid to acknowledge the joke even by a smile. They saw, however, that, for once, Pa was determined, and as Pa's funds were to be largely drawn on, it was judged wiser to let the carriage remain at home, and, moreover, to give up the point with as good a grace as might be.

"But I tell you what, Tom Gallagher, said his spouse in a half jest, whole earnest tone, "let it be where it is till we come back—unless you take Eliza and the baby out now and then for a ride. *No more of your tricks, mind!* or you and I'll not be friends."

"What tricks do you mean?" said Tom very innocently.

"What tricks do I mean?—you know well enough what tricks I mean! As if I didn't hear all about

your driving out with Mister Atty Garrell, no less, when you got *our* backs turned!—ay! and before ever *we* set our foot in our own carriage.” “Ma!” whispered Fanny in a tone of strong admonition, and immediately Mrs. Gallagher’s rising anger cooled down, and she wound up with a little forced cackling laugh: “Well! I know it was for want of a thought you did it—but you know Atty Garrell is no companion for *you*, especially in your own carriage—and so we’ll say nothing about it—for goodness’ sake, Tom! don’t be making so little of yourself and us!—respect yourself, Tom! and the world will respect you!”

Tom, well pleased to get off so easily, was disposed to promise anything and everything, and so was left in charge of the carriage, with permission, as before mentioned, to take himself and Mrs. S. C. and Master Herbert—or, as he was already designated, “Hebby”—out for an airing. Mr. S. C. was, of course, included in the privilege, when that young gentleman felt inclined to avail himself thereof.

It was a subject of some regret that Mrs. Sam could not accompany her mother and sisters to Sara toga, but, of course, it was not to be thought of under the circumstances, as Master Hebby would have made but a sorry travelling companion, and his mother couldn’t think of going anywhere with “a squalling baby,” as she rather contemptuously styled her first-born.

When Tom found himself in quiet possession of the house, with a certain Ally Brady, an ancient spinster, a cousin of Mrs. Gallagher's, for house-keeper *pro tem*, he cheerily resolved to make himself at home and comfortable during the absence of the ladies. To that end, taking time by the forelock, he invited his neighbor Mr. Fogarty, John McConoghy, Henry Hackett, and, as a matter of course, Atty Garrell, to "smoke a cigar" with him the very first evening he had the house to himself. Now Tom Gallagher was, in his way, an excellent entertainer, and when, as on the present occasion, he could do things just as he liked, his heart expanded with genial warmth, and he felt exuberantly happy in the company of his "chosen few."

"Why didn't you bring Michael, Henry?" said he to Henry Hackett, busying himself at the same time in arranging on the table certain accompaniments for the *cigar* to which he had respectively invited his friends.

"And who'd mind the store if I did?" inquired Henry. "You know it won't mind itself."

"Of course not, Henry, but couldn't you close a little earlier for one night?"

"I could if I had my fortune made like you or Mr. Fogarty here, but dear knows when that will be."

"Maybe it's not so far off as you think," observed William H. "What about the lot of sugar you were looking after?"

"Didn't get it, Mr. Fogarty! didn't get it, sir!" and Henry shock his head dejectedly.

"Why, how was that, man, did you go to McKeon?"

"I did, then, but he couldn't do anything for me, at least he said so."

"And did you tell him *I* was willing to go security?"

"Of course I did, sir!"

"Well! and what did he say?"

"Oh! he said he knew you very well, and couldn't wish for any better security, but he had promised the sugar to Lindsay in — street and, of course, couldn't break his word—and so he wished me good morning, and I had to walk out."

"Ay! that's the way with them all," said William H. shaking the ashes from his cigar, "the rich man will get a chance where the poor, struggling man won't. And the worst of it is when it's your own countryman that has it in his power to do you a good turn, and won't do it. Now, just think of that, Tom!—there's Dan McKeon and he had the selling of that cargo of sugar,—poor Hackett here wanted to get some, and as it was to be sold in lots, he thought he had a good chance of laying in what would do him for some time. He had about half the money for what he wanted, and I told him I'd go security for the other half, for Dan and I had many a dealing in our time, and he knows how I stand as well as any one. But you see he wouldn't

throw the bargain in Henry's way, even to oblige me, but must give it to that Lindsay that's as rich as a Jew. Now a'n't it too bad?"

"Bad!" repeated Tom, "why it's shameful, but unluckily it's nothing new."

Here John McConoghy made his appearance, and being questioned by Tom as to why he didn't come earlier, responded with:

"Why didn't *you* come to the meeting?—I thought I'd see you all there!"

"Why, what's up now?" said Tom Gallagher.

"What's up now! Well! you're a nice man for a citizen!—maybe you don't know either that Roland McFustian is expected out in the next steamer?"

"Well! and what if he is?"

"Why, he's going to get a public reception, to be sure!—hand me over a cigar, Tom! will you?"

"A public reception!" said William H. "And what for, John?"

"As if *I* could answer *that* question!—I guess for what all the McFustians get receptions for in New York. It's a sign you didn't read the papers this morning or you'd know all about the great McFustian—why his name was at the top of the first column in every one of the Dailies in extra-large capitals—*Expected arrival of the illustrious patriot, McFustian! Public reception! Great preparations—Torchlight procession—Grand serenade! Hurrah! three cheers for McFustian! God save the President!*" And John waving his cigar over his shoulder with

well-feigned enthusiasm, the lighted end came directly in contact with Atty Garrell's somewhat lank side-locks, which might have caught the electric spark had they not been oiled with extra care on that momentous occasion.

As it was Atty was quite flurried, and made a little exclamation expressive of nervous trepidation: "Dear me, Mr. McConoghy! you came near poking your cigar in my eye!"

"Bless my soul, Atty!" cried John turning quickly on his seat, and, as it were, very much in earnest, "you a'nt scorched, are you?"

Atty, slightly ruffled by the obstreperous laughter of Tom, and the quieter but no less hearty merriment of William H., answered rather tartly: "If I a'nt, I needn't thank *you*, Mr. McConoghy!—I guess you paid a visit to the Pewter Mug* after your McFustian meeting!"

"Come, come, Atty! never mind!" said McConoghy slapping him vigorously on the shoulder, "I didn't mean to make a goose of you, though I believe I did *singe* you a little."

"But what about McFustian?" inquired William H. "To be sure we all saw the great flourish about him in the *Herald* this morning, but, then,

* The "Pewter Mug" is a sort of appendage to the famous Tammany Hall—a council-room, as it were, whither the chief men, or wire-pullers, are wont to retire from the noise and publicity of the larger establishment to discuss their private plans, and such other matters as pewter mugs are wont to furnish on such occasions.

Heralds are great blowers, you know, and always blowing somebody's trumpet, so I didn't pay much attention. What did McFustian do?"

"Faith, I never heard of the man before," said Tom looking up with great *naïveté* from the jug of punch he was skilfully preparing. Tom, it may be seen, was not much given to the reading of newspapers.

"Well!" said McConoghy, "Roland hasn't done much, that's a fact—but he has made a great noise, and that's all the same now-a-days. He was first among the Chartists in England, and helped Fergus O'Connor to kick up a dust there—after that he went to Hungary to help the Magyars—lastly, he was out with Smith O'Brien and the rest of them at Slievenamon, and knocked down a policeman with a blow of his fist. I don't know what all he did since—but he's coming out here to seek his fortune like every one else, and, of course, he must have a reception—they say he's a wonderful great hand at making a speech."

"And old Tammany is going to take him up?" asked Mr. Fogarty.

"To be sure, to be sure; we have chartered a steamboat, or I think two of them, to meet him down below the Narrows, each with a brass band on board, and escort him up to the city; then all the trades are to march, and I believe the Mayor and the Common-Council, and there's to be speeches in the City Hall, and the troops are to turn out——"

"Nonsense, man! you don't mean to say they're *all* to turn out?" cried Tom incredulously.

"Well! not all, I believe, but some of them are, I know for certain, and the police, too——"

"A fine chance for the rogues and rowdies," timidly suggested Atty.

"And the firemen are to have a torchlight procession in the evening, and I'm not sure whether there's to be fireworks or not, but I know the Tammany folk are going to give him a dinner, and they say there's three or four judges, and I don't know how many other high-up gentlemen, all vieing with each other who'll have him for a guest."

"God help us!" said Tom, who had just been holding a consultation at the room-door *sotto voce* with Ally Brady—"God help us! and the city and Tammany Hall are going to all them rounds about a fellow that has never done anything but make speeches——"

"And wasn't that a great deal, Tom?" said William H. with caustic humor; "why, only for him and the like of him, you and I, and all the rest of the world would go to sleep and sleep till doomsday. It does the world good to be poked up once in a while, like the wild beasts in the menagerie—there would be no fun, at all, in going to see them if the keeper didn't come along now and then and stir them up. The McFustians are the greatest people out, for they keep us all alive galloping round and round on their hobbies"

“On their hobbies, Mr. Fogarty, how is that?” Tom Gallagher never dealt in metaphor himself, and was sometimes at a loss to understand those who did.

“Why, you see, Tom!” said William H. setting his head knowingly on one side, “there’s people that walk a-foot through the world—plain people like ourselves here—stop a bit! I know what you’re going to say, but I tell you, *you’re* one of the pedestrians if you had fifty carriages—well! there’s others that’s always mounted on some conceit or notion of their own—that’s what we call a hobby, Tom,—and there they go, as I said, galloping back and forth, up and down, at the rate of a hunt, content as long as they get people to look and listen, and knowing no more than a blind bat what they’re driving at or where the hobby will carry them—for all the world like the phooka we used to hear so much about in our early days. Now the beauty of it is, that your hobby-riders have no respect, at all, for other people’s hobbies, but dash on and on, trampling down all before them, and what’s worse than all, they’re not content with riding the hobby themselves but must have other people mount, too, and gallop away as *they* do—whatever road their phooka is pleased to take, nothing will serve them but the rest of the world must follow suit. Do you understand, now?”

This question being of general application was answered individually after the manner peculiar to each.

Tom nodded, and said: "Of course, we do, Mr. Fogarty!" McConoghy laughed, and, taking his cigar from his mouth, exclaimed: "I'm thinking there's few but rides some hobby or another!" while Atty smiled a wintry, watery smile, and said: "Very good, Mr. Fogarty! very good, indeed, sir!"

"But to speak seriously," resumed William H., "these public receptions are come to be a great farce—at least here in New York. They're so common now that nobody cares a thing about them. I remember when I came out here first—let me see—thirty years ago—ay! and for long after, a public reception in New York was worth something—it really was,—because, you see, it was only given to men that had done something to deserve such an honor. Everything was conducted, too, in a different way from what it is now, and the whole affair was grand—but now every fellow that has made a little noise in the world or got up a row anywhere under the sun in the name of Liberty—which with a good many of them means *bosh* and *buncumb*—or has raised a dust at home or abroad as he dashed along on his phooka-hobby—oh, of course, he must have a reception in New York, and the whole city is on tip-toe to get a look at him. Now, go no farther than McFustian. What earthly good has that fellow done? He has made a great many flourishing speeches, to be sure—(you see I know more about him than I pretended, John!)—but what if he has?—I tell you he's nothing better than a big

wind-bag, puffing himself out like the frogs in the fable to make a great man of himself—which he can't do, for nature didn't do it for him—and it's ten chances to one if he don't burst as the frog did, and make a holy show of himself, and a fool of the whole city, when he's here a while on his own shifts. Such things have happened before, and may happen again. I wonder will our great city ever come to the years of discretion, or learn to profit by experience?"

"Whether or no we'll drink to it's prosperity," said the host, "it's a first-rate place for a man to make a living, if he only knows how." The proposition was hailed with acclamation, and duly carried out.



CHAPTER XVII.

RELATING CHIEFLY TO THE PAST.

DINNER was over that day at Rheinfeldt House, the quiet *tete-a-tete* dinner, quieter even than usual, for Madam Von Wiegel and her daughter were both more silent than their wont, each apparently busy with her own thoughts. They left the dinner-table with the dessert untasted, much to Betty's annoyance, for it so happened that she had succeeded to a marvel in a delicate dish of *blanc mange* of which the ladies were fond, and had, moreover, a choice display of what fruit the season could afford. It was very mortifying, no doubt, and Betty grumbled exceedingly, and vented her spleen on Jan as the only legitimate object within reach, telling him with marked emphasis that "it was easy seen where the odd ways came from, and, indeed, there couldn't much else but odd ways come from the same art." Whether Jan understood the drift of the allusion or not, he was fain to appear as though the latter were the case, and nodded unqualified assent as *per force* he should.

The ladies, meanwhile, took a turn in the garden, then placed themselves on a rustic seat in the back piazza, and talked of many things, of everything, indeed, save and except the one that was uppermost

in the minds of both. The old ancestral castle by the Rhine and the smiling Rhenish vineyards, the wild traditions connected with the rocks and hills and valleys of that storied region, the old-world manners and customs found in perfection amongst the Rhineland peasants, and lastly, the merits and demerits of Bulwer's "Pilgrims of the Rhine," all these were in turn discussed, some with affectionate remembrance. Then, by a natural transition, fond memory passed to Castle Mahon, and the grand old pile rose before them, its turrets gilt with "the light of other days," and its halls peopled with the dead and distant. And Bertha told her mother of pleasant excursions in the neighborhood, through "deep-vallied Desmond," and St. Finbar's lovely isle

"—— in lone Gougane Barra

Where Allua of songs rushes forth as an arrow."

"I, too," said Bertha fixing her eyes on the sun's slanting rays where they lay in golden splendor on the soft green of the garden alleys; "I, too, have stood at early morn and at dewy eve and watched the shadows of the tall mountains sleeping on the lake, and dreamed of fairy palaces in those quiet depths where the peace denied to mortals here on earth might perchance be found,"—she paused a moment, then repressed a sigh that was struggling upwards from her heart, and went on with nervous rapidity: "Yes, my dear mother, we have stood, hat is, *I* have stood

“ Where grows the wild-ash, and a time-stricken willow
Looks chidingly down on the mirth of the billow ;
As, like some gay child, that sad monitor scorning,
It lightly laughs back to the laugh of the morning.”*

The smile faded from her lip, and the glow of pleasurable remembrance from her cheek as she thought of “ the love-lighted eyes that hung over the wave,” when last she looked forth on the fairy scene. She asked herself how much of the exquisite charm of that well-remembered scene of lonely beauty was due to the companionship she then enjoyed, and she murmured to herself “ Ah, true it is

“ “——— that the best charms of nature improve
When we see them reflected from looks that we love.’

And just as true

“ “ That oft even joy is unheeded and lost
For want of some heart that can echo it near.’ ”

“ Bertha, my dear !” said her mother, who had been watching the rapid changes of her mobile features, with absorbing interest, “ Bertha, my dear ! you seem almost to forget the present in your rapt devotion to the past.”

“ I can never forget *you*, mother, present or past,” said Bertha with a smile of ineffable affection. “ But, hark ! is not that a horse coming up the avenue ?”

It was, and Bertha hastening, in advance of her mother, reached the front piazza in time to welcome

Robert Murray, who was just throwing himself from his horse.

"Why, Robert—Robert Murray," said Bertha with unfeigned cordiality, "can it be you back so soon? Welcome, a thousand times welcome!"

Poor Robert—his first impulse was to clasp Bertha to his heart, in the blissful illusion of her evident joy on seeing him, but, alas! a moment—half a moment, recalled to his mind the saddening thought that it was *only* as a sister he was to regard her, and with a sigh that went to Bertha's heart, he took her hand and raised it respectfully to his lips, then dropped it as though it were lead, and turned to greet her mother, who had just made her appearance.

"Why, Robert, my dear fellow!" said Madam Von Wiegel with heart-warm kindness, "how glad I am to see you!—but how did you manage to get back so soon?"

"On business, Madam Von Wiegel! on business for the Colonel. He would have had to come himself, and asked me if I had any objection to come in his place. Oh! he's a glorious old fellow!—like a father to us youngsters, and I do believe he studies to anticipate our wishes!"

"He has anticipated *ours* as well, Robert—on this occasion," said the old lady, regarding the young soldier through her glasses with a beaming smile, while Bertha murmured to herself:

"Oh! beautiful enthusiasm of youth, how pure,

how fresh, how fervid ! May no cloud ever darken that bright spirit—no blight ever fall on that loving young heart !”

“ When did you arrive, Robert ?” asked Madam Von Wiegel, as they entered the parlor together.

“ Something less than an hour ago”—he stopped and looked at Bertha, then quickly added : “ I have but twenty-four hours to remain, so you know I have to make the most of my opportunity.”

“ You are just in time to see Major Montague and Captain Bellew before they leave.”

“ They are not gone yet, then ?” said Robert with a sudden change of countenance.

“ No, but they *must* leave in a day or two—they are to join their regiment at Malta to proceed direct to India.”

“ To India !—ha !” Robert turned as if unconsciously to look at Bertha, but Bertha was looking at the Japanese missionary on the mantel-piece, and seemed as though her faculties were absorbed in the study of that venerable figure.

“ So Don Bellianus is going to war,” said Robert good-naturedly, “ and that fine-hearted fellow, Bellew. Well ! God save them for the hearts that love them !” His voice trembled, but he mastered his emotion, and added : “ I pity the soldier who has no *girl* to *leave* behind him when the voice of duty calls him to the post of danger.”

Bertha was not so deeply engrossed in the contemplation of the sculptured image before her, but

she heard these words and felt the sorrowful meaning that did not meet the ear. She turned and looked at Robert with a smile that was not cheering.

"Why, Robert Murray," said she, "how can you say so?—I think he is much more to be pitied who *has* such ties to bind him, when the hour of danger comes!"

Robert shook his head sadly, and turned to answer Madam Von Wiegel, who had just asked whether he meant to spend the evening with them.

"I believe not," said Robert with some hesitation, "having but the one evening to be at home, I am commissioned rather to ask you and Bertha to spend it with *us*. My father is to send the carriage bye-and-bye."

"I am sorry it will not be in our power to go," said Madam Von Wiegel, "for I asked Major Montague and Captain Bellew to spend the evening here, and they promised, if possible, to do so. I will send immediately to ask your father and Alice to join our party."

To this Robert agreed with a sort of good-humored desperation that amused, while it pained Bertha. It was as if he had said in her ear, "Yes, let them come! when Greek meets Greek then is the tug of war!"

The hour that passed before the arrival of Mr. Murray and Alice was anything but pleasant to Bertha. Restless and anxious as she was, she would have given anything in the world to be alone, yet

there was Robert Murray, of all people the one whose presence was the least desirable at that particular time. She felt that he saw and fancied he understood the nervous anxiety to which she was a prey, and when she did happen to meet his eyes, their expression was so sad and so reproachful that she could hardly keep from bursting into tears. At length the old gentleman and Alice came, and conversation flowed more freely, but still there was a cloud over all, and Bertha felt that she was partly the cause. More than once Mr. Murray, in his good-humored way, alluded, as he was wont, to the possibility of an alliance between the houses, but none of the others seemed desirous of continuing the subject, and it was easy to see that it gave pain both to Robert and Bertha. The old man was himself more dejected than usual, and his eyes would fill with tears as they rested on the altered face of his darling son, and marked how the sunny brightness of youth was already obscured, and melancholy sat enthroned on the so lately boyish brow—melancholy

“With leaden eye that loves the ground.”

“And all this,” he thought, “is Bertha’s work—God forgive her! I would hate her if I could, but I can’t.”

Alice experienced much the same feelings, with, perhaps, a keener sense of her brother’s disappointment, but in her case the sympathy was almost equally divided between Robert and Bertha—whose secret struggles she saw, though without under-

standing their nature or extent. As for Madam Von Wiegel she shared to a painful degree her daughter's anxiety, increased, if possible, in her case, by the mystery that overhung its source. Her best wishes were with Robert Murray, whom she loved almost as a son, but she had only too much reason to suspect that her daughter's rejection of his suit was, and must be, final. Like Bertha, and perhaps each of the others in a lesser degree, she watched with intense anxiety for the appearance of the two officers, but hour after hour passed and still they came not. It was very obvious, to her mother, at least, and not a little surprising, that their non-appearance was a positive relief to Bertha, whose spirits seemed to rise as the evening wore away. There was a hollow ring, however, in the tones of her mirth and a strange light in her eyes, that her mother was not slow to observe, and even Robert as he took his place beside her at supper whispered, "Bertha, you are ill at ease—would that your peace were in *my* keeping!"

"It is safer in my own," responded Bertha with a smile that was bright enough to deceive most people, but it did not deceive Robert. He exerted himself, however, to dispel the gloom that was again creeping over the little party, remarking at the same time that as two places were vacant at the board, it devolved on those present to make up for the deficiency—as far as possible, he pointedly added.

"Confound them!" muttered the old gentleman,

who had carefully abstained from any allusion to the expected guests, "I wish people wouldn't make promises unless they mean to keep them. I'm sorry Bellew isn't here, though, but as for his Excellency Major Montague, I must say his absence is a cordial. The sight of him makes me feel as if I were so much cream in a freezer—it actually does."

"Father!" said Alice somewhat too earnestly Bertha thought, "Father! how can you speak so of Major Montague?—cold and reserved as he is—proud even, if you will—there is something about him that makes you love him—or at least makes you feel as if you *could* love him, oh! very dearly—would he but let you!"

Though Bertha's cheek flushed at the tone of feeling in which Alice spoke, she thanked her by a smile that made the gentle girl happy. Perhaps Bertha's superior intelligence penetrated the kindly motive that underlay her praise of the absent, sincere though that praise was.

Robert was silent. He was far too generous and high-minded to attempt underrating a man whose vast superiority he could not conceal from himself, merely because he was not present. But in this instance he was also restrained by a motive of delicacy that was fully appreciated by her whose good opinion was dearer to him than the breath of life.

The supper was soon over, and the Murrays did not remain long after, but they would not go without a promise from the ladies to dine with them on

the following day, as Robert had to leave by the evening train for Washington.

When they were gone Madam Von Wiegel threw back the heavy damask curtains from one of the windows, and the soft moonlight streamed in. "What a lovely night, Bertha!" she said, after a moment's silence. "Lovely, indeed, mother! it is like a dream of peace!" and they both were silent as they stood together with Bertha's arm resting lightly on her mother's.

"I wonder our military friends did not come," said the mother, at length, perhaps divining her daughter's thought.

"So do not I, mother," was Bertha's answer, "I hardly thought they would."

"And why, my dearest daughter?"

"That I cannot tell you, my own dear mother, but their absence to-night renews a settled conviction on my mind, and throws me back where I was three months ago, with a barbed arrow in my heart, and no earthly hope to cheer me except your precious love."

Madam Von Wiegel turned quickly, and was shocked to see the pallid hopeless dejection too plainly visible on Bertha's face. "Bertha! my heart's one treasure!" said she, drawing her to a seat on a sofa near, "this ignorance—this suspense—must not, cannot continue! tell me, I beseech you, what this trouble is that weighs so heavy on your heart!—who so fit to share your sorrows, if sorrows you have, as

the mother who nursed you at her breast—who loves you more than herself?”

“I know it—I feel it, mother!” said Bertha with forced composure, “and I mean to tell you all this very night—ay, even now you shall see the dark shadow that overhangs my life. It will not take long to raise the curtain!”

Turning her back to the gas-light and her face to the mild beams from the window, she paused a while to collect her scattered thoughts, then began as follows :

“My life at Castle Mahon was, I need not tell you, a happy one—too happy, indeed, for this probationary world of ours. Pleasant it is to look back upon—ay, pleasant as a dream of hope. To you I need not say that there

“ ‘—— All is flow’ry, wild and sweet,’

And love is *not* wanting. Love, the tenderest and most sincere, surrounded me, as you well know, from the earliest dawn of infancy, and at Castle Mahon, after my dear grandmother prevailed on you and my father to leave me with her, the genial influence increased rather than diminished, for whereas I had only you and my dear, dear father to love and cherish me in my childhood’s home by the Rhine, I had many hearts as warm, and true friends as kind and as indulgent in my girlhood’s home by the lovely Lee. My grandmother, indeed, went far to spoil Eveleen and myself by her excessive kindness, but in justice to her precious memory I must say that

her judicious and enlightened teachings made us proof against the otherwise injurious effects of her more than maternal tenderness. Oh! she was a woman of many, many gifts, my ever-dear 'grand-mamma,' as we fondly used to call her."

"Heaven rest her soul in mercy!" murmured Madam Von Wiegel as she wiped away the tears that Bertha's heart-warm praise of her mother had called forth; "Heaven rest her soul in peace, she *was*, indeed, all that you say, my daughter! but pray go on!"

"You know my grandmother would not hear of us girls being sent to a boarding-school, though Uncle Gerald and Aunt Helen were most anxious to have us go to the Ursuline Convent in Cork—a governess was accordingly brought into the house for Eveleen's education and mine, and this lady, Mrs. Kilally, remained with us till I was twenty and Eveleen eighteen. She was a widow—a woman of superior attainments, with talents of a high order, and tastes the most refined. She had travelled much in her earlier years, for her husband had inherited a considerable property, which he unfortunately squandered away at the gaming-table, then drank himself to death, and left his widow to her own resources—a good riddance for her, all things considered, and I believe she thought so herself, for she always seemed to me contented if not happy. Well! it was just about the time that Mrs. Kilally left us that we all went one day to visit Dunmore Castle

and its far-famed demesne. You know the coolness that existed between the Montagues and our family——”

“Of course I do, Bertha! and it dated from the breaking off of my engagement with Lord Dunmore, of which I told you a few weeks since.”

“Well! I never knew, and to say the truth, I never *cared* to know, why it was that the intercourse between the families had been so suddenly and entirely broken off. But we young people had heard so much of the fine old mansion and the picture-gallery and the grand old woods and sylvan glades of the noble park where the red-deer strayed at will, that we persuaded Uncle Walter to take us there to see the sights, and as Lord Dunmore was then dead, Uncle Gerald did not oppose our wishes. It was on that occasion, my dear mother,” added Bertha after a pause, “that I first saw Edgar Montague. He was in deep mourning for his father, and when he rose on our entrance into the library, where he had been writing, I thought it was some illusion of my poetic fancy, for I had seen such visions in my dreams, but never before in dull reality. You see him as he is now, mother, but striking as his *toute ensemble* is, you can form no idea of the fascination that hung around him under the softening influence of his recent heavy sorrow—the deep melancholy impressed on every perfect feature—the touching sadness of his finely-modulated voice, and the listless, hopeless despondency of his

whole demeanor. Oh! Edgar!" she said with a passionate burst of sorrow, burying her face in her hands, "Oh Edgar Montague! how I pitied you then,—how——"

"How you loved him afterwards!" said her mother, drawing her to her.

"Mother, I did not say I loved him," said Bertha, struggling to recover her composure, "surely you do not think I would unsought be won."

"No, Bertha! I could not possibly think that—but *were* you unsought?"

"I know not that I could say so with truth, my dear mother, but it is quite certain that although Edgar seemed from the first to take a particular pleasure in my society, he never spoke directly of *love*, in the ordinary sense of the term. He did the honors of his house to us that first day of our acquaintance with that stately grace which you see is natural to him, and seemed half to forget his sorrow in the pleasure of showing us all that he judged worthy of our attention. You have no idea how delightful a companion he is when he chooses to lay aside the mantle of reserve and unbend from that aristocratic *hauteur* which is apt to prejudice people against him. He has seen much, and read much, and thought a great deal more, and his mind has a range altogether beyond the common run of every-day mortals, and there is, above all, under that calm, cold exterior, a depth of feeling that springs in part from his poetic temperament. In

short, my dear mother, I saw in Edgar Montague, the nearest approach I had ever seen to that Sir Charles Grandison, whose imaginary perfections, as described by the graphic pen of Richardson, had quite won my girlish heart, and thousands of other girlish hearts, too ! I do not mean to say that Edgar was quite *so* perfect, but he was perfect enough, *I* thought, for any woman, to love and admire. Aunt Helen was delighted with his graceful urbanity, and Eveleen declared he ought to have been born a prince, and thought he would make a charming hero of romance, but like our gentle Alice, I fancy she was rather afraid of him, and he, on the other hand, treated her as he would a playful child."

"But, Bertha!" said her mother, "how did our friend come to play the host, then?—you told me he was the younger son—I know Lord Dunmore left two."

"The elder brother was attached to the Spanish embassy at the time of his father's death, which, you know, occurred quite unexpectedly, and as the news did not reach Madrid till after he was interred, he thought it unnecessary to ask leave of absence. Edgar had but just returned after spending a month with Lord Dunmore in Madrid ; he had also visited Grenada and Cordova, and it was joy to hear him describe the scenes of old renown,—the faded glories of the Alhambra, and the other Moorish remains he had seen beneath the deep blue sky and amid the orange groves of Spain. I believe he found me the

best listener, for very soon he addressed himself particularly to me, and spoke to me as he did to no other, of his own feelings and impressions. And opportunities were not wanting, for Uncle Walter and Aunt Helen pressed Mr. Montague to visit us at Castle Mahon, and he lost no time in doing so. Uncle Gerald and grandmamma were not quite so much taken with him at first as we hoped and expected, but it suited his humor to make himself agreeable to them, and, of course, he succeeded to a marvel. Dear grandmamma! how she loved to hear him tell of the far-off lands he had visited with his tutor immediately after leaving Old Trinity, the strange sights he had seen, and, above all, the fragments of legendary lore he had gathered by the way. We soon found, too, that he excelled in music, and his flute lent its charm to many a blissful hour in the drawing-room or saloon, as his clarionet full many a time awoke the echoes of the night as we glided over the moonlit water between the picturesque banks of our lovely river. But he came not always alone, for on one of our visits to Dunmore Castle, he introduced to us his friend Bellew, who was, at once, admitted into our circle and became a prime favorite with Uncle Gerald, in particular, who took pleasure in calling him his namesake. He did not belong originally to our county——”

“Why, of course not, Bertha!” interrupted her mother, “I never knew of any Bellews there. Let me see, though!—I think one of the Miss Sullivans

of — House married a Mr. Bellew in the county Dublin or Kildare, or somewhere there—a branch, if I remember right, of the Bellews of Louth.”

“Precisely, mother!—how clear your memory is!—and our lively friend Gerald is the son of that Rhoda Sullivan to whom you have referred. Well with this agreeable addition to our society, we extended our sphere of pleasure and made excursions to various parts of the Island—we even journeyed to the Giant’s Causeway, and saw the Atlantic wave wrestling with those pillared rocks that form the northern barrier of the Emerald Isle—we visited, too, the Balbec of Ireland, the city of the dead amongst the Wicklow Mountains; we mused on the nothingness of fame and grandeur amid the desert scenes of classic Clonmacnoise, and drank in poetry from the fairy beauty of Killarney’s lakes and ‘Innisfallen’s lovely isle.’ Ah! there, indeed, it is that

“ ‘Lost in the future, the soul wanders on,

And all of it is life but its sweetness is gone.’

“Our party had not long returned from this visit to the world-famous Lakes when death settled down on the towers of Castle-Mahon, and my dear, dear grandmother was called hence to receive the reward of a well-spent life, leaving a void in our circle that the youngest of us keenly felt for many a dreary month.

“As if with a view to divert our minds from the heavy loss we had sustained, and enliven the gloom of our heartfelt mourning, Mr. Montague asked

and received permission to bring his brother's intended bride to see us." Here Bertha paused again, and leaning back on her seat pressed her hands on her eyes as though to shut out some unwelcome object. It was some moments before she resumed her story, and her mother made no attempt to hurry her.

"Our new acquaintance, Lady Susan Blackwood, was the third daughter of a Cromwellian earl whose name you must remember,—Lord Milhaven——"

"Remember it!—yes, indeed, I do—and a bad breed they were, those Blackwoods—I knew that same Earl of Milhaven when he was Viscount Brereton, long before his father's death, and, by-the-bye! he and Harry Montague were great friends. They had been at Cambridge together, and were, I believe, fellow-graduates—their friendship, though, could only be accounted for by the axiom that extremes meet, for no two could be more unlike. *I* could never bear Brereton, who always gave me the impression of a splendid but venomous snake. He was so smooth, so insidious, and so designing, yet graceful and exceedingly handsome withal. Attractive he was, undoubtedly, most dangerously attractive, as, I fear, many found to their cost."

"Why, mother," exclaimed Bertha with intense eagerness, "one would think it was his daughter—I mean Lady Susan's—portrait you were drawing. She was about two-and-twenty when I first saw her, and I confess she dazzled me at first with her bright,

gazelle-like beauty, her pretty airs of coquetry, and the sparkling wit that dropped from her tongue and flashed from her black eyes whenever she chose to make a display, and that was pretty often, especially when gentlemen were present. She could languish, too, with the prettiest grace imaginable, and her simplicity was at times entirely captivating—fancy Kate Kearney and Nora Creina wrapped in one, and their playful charms and artless graces wielded by a well-tutored, highly-educated young damsel with the prestige of noble blood to crown all her potent attractions. It pleased her lively ladyship to cultivate our acquaintance, for what purpose I never then thought of considering, never doubting the sincerity of her professions. Lady Susan's demeanor towards Mr. Montague was characterized by that easy familiarity which became their relative positions, quite sisterly, in fact, and yet, it seemed to me that the connecting link between them was not kept in sight as one might reasonably expect. Lord Dunmore was seldom mentioned, and his return rarely alluded to. This early excited my attention, and I could by no means understand it, nor neither could Aunt Helen when we talked the matter over, till one day, being all at Dunmore Castle, Lady Harriet Blackwood, one of Lady Susan's elder sisters, asked me if I had ever seen Lord Dunmore's portrait, and on my answering in the negative, she took me to a rather obscure corner in the picture-gallery and said laughingly, 'There he is!—what do

you think of Susan's taste?" I did not say *what* I thought, but I felt the blood forsaking my cheek, and a tremor creeping over my frame. In the pale, sallow face before me, deeply marked with the small-pox, I could discover no trace—not even the slightest, of the manly beauty for which these Montagues were, and are, as you know, distinguished. The riddle was, in part, solved, but not quite, not to conviction. Meanwhile Mr. Montague's demeanor towards myself was such as might have flattered me into the belief that I had an interest in his heart; he still seemed to take a certain pleasure in discoursing with me of things high and even holy, and I fancied at times that his lofty intellect had caught glimpses of Catholic truth. How fervently I prayed that he might be guided to a knowledge, which alone was wanting, it seemed to me, to make him all my highest aspirations would have desired. Vain dreams! hopes too rudely shattered, the hour was at hand when the darkness of doubt and the coldness of distrust took the place of both. But I see you are weary, mother! and as Jan and Betty must be waiting for the night-prayer, had we not better postpone the little that remains of my story till we have dismissed them for the night?"

"I am glad you have reminded me of what I was inexcusably forgetting, Bertha!" her mother replied; "however anxious I may be to hear the sequel of your recital, we must get prayers over and let Jan and Betty get to rest."

They then repaired to the oratory, and the worthy couple were summoned from below in no very good humor at being kept up so late, for it was eleven o'clock, and that was a very late hour in that quiet, well-ordered household.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DRUID'S CHAIR.

WHEN the servants were dismissed for the night, Madam Von Wiegel and her daughter waited in the Oratory to perform their private devotions, and then Bertha attended her mother, as usual, to her apartment.

"Now, my dear! will you finish your story?" said the elder lady, placing herself in a chair; "I am so anxious to hear the sequel that I am sure I could not sleep in this state of suspense."

"I fear you will be none the better to-morrow, my dear mother, for such an unusually late vigil, but seeing that you are so desirous of hearing what is to come, I suppose we must extend it a little farther—it will be only a little, for there is not much to be told now." So saying, she seated herself on a tabouret at her mother's feet, and with her arm resting on her knee, resumed:

"Things were as I told you, *ma chère maman* when one day as we strolled through the grounds at Castle Mahon, Lady Susan with her arm in mine—for her ladyship seemed to have taken quite a fancy to my insignificant self—we found ourselves all at once in that pleasant lawn by the hazel copse where stands the Druid's Chair. Mr. Montague,

struck with the beauty of the scene far and near, observed to me in rather a low tone :

“ ‘ What a taste for the beautiful those old-world people had, after all ! I have remarked, and doubtless you have, too, Miss Von Wiegel, that these pagan remains are, in most instances, finely situated.’ ”

“ The answer I was going to make was forestalled by Lady Susan : ‘ What a comical sight it must have been to see those queer old Druids in their white robes, and mistletoe-crowns, with a cowled cloak by way of promenade-dress when they journeyed abroad from their ancient woods.’ ”

“ ‘ Comical indeed !’ said Uncle Walter who was of the party, looking back over his shoulder—you know how precise he is in regard to the use of words, and withal so satirical. ‘ I know not how comical the ‘queer old Druids’ might have appeared in their priestly garb, but I think your ladyship would have looked divine as a *priestess* of that old rite.’ ”

“ ‘ You flatter me, Mr. Walter !’ said her ladyship affectedly. ‘ You are really more than kind !—what say you, Edgar ? would I have made a tolerable priestess—or a vestal ?’ she added, speaking across me to Mr. Montague with one of those arch glances which shot like an electric flash through her long silken lashes. ”

“ ‘ Or a pythoness,’ said Montague in a tone neither jest nor earnest.

“ ‘ A pythoness !—ha ! it is a good thought !’ cried

Lady Susan with more eagerness than I thought the occasion required. 'Surely yes—a pythoness!' and she suddenly threw into those wonderful eyes of hers a look of such wild inspiration that we all stood entranced.

"'Prophecy, O sybil!' said Edgar Montague, 'tell us of the absent—can thine eye penetrate space and scan the distance?'

"A rich glow came suddenly to Lady Susan's beautiful cheek, then fading left it pale as alabaster. She was about to answer the question when Eveleen broke in girl-like with joyous excitement, 'Wouldn't it be delightful, Bertha, to have a sort of little private masquerade here one of the first moonlight nights we have—let us play Druids and Druidesses in character.'

"'And give judgment *à la Brehon* from yonder chair,' said Montague with a smile. 'I second the motion, Miss Eveleen. What says your fair cousin?' meaning me.

"'My fair cousin wouldn't dare dissent from any proposition of mine,' said Eveleen in a tone of authority.

"'Not from this one, certainly!' I replied. 'You deserve the company's thanks, *ma chère*, for so felicitous an idea. I am sure Aunt Helen will be much pleased with the project, and we shall ask your sisters, Lady Susan, to assist on the occasion.'

"'Oh! I can answer for them,' said her ladyship carelessly. 'If Edgar will drive us over to Mount

Brereton to-morrow—or this evening—I know the girls will be most happy to come, especially Harriet and Louisa, and I think my father might possibly come himself. You know he is home for the Easter recess.'

" 'You know I am but a poor *cavaliero servante*,' was the reply, 'but, of course, if you ladies lay your joint commands on me I must resign myself to the necessity.'

"Lady Susan hastily withdrew her arm from mine and gliding round to Montague said something in a low voice, so low that it reached no ear but his own. She held up her taper finger with sportive grace, and Montague bowed his acquiescence, though I could see without actually looking at him that he changed color and bit his lip. Uncle Walter went heartily into our project and, as I expected, so did the other dear ones at home. Ah! they were all easily persuaded to go into anything that promised pleasure and amusement to the younger members of their house and their visitors."

"But, Bertha, my dear!" said her mother, "I wonder your uncles and your Aunt Helen agreed to have the Druid's Chair occupied in the way you mention. *They*, at least, knew well how many superstitions clung around that ancient seat."

"Why, mother, you speak so gravely," said Bertha, "that one would be apt to think you a believer in those fantastic superstitions."

"Believing or not," said Madam Von Wiegel,

"when I was a girl it would have been hard to persuade myself or any of my young companions to sit in the Druid's Chair. Tales of sudden death, or other mishap following on such rashness, were so common that in spite of our reason we young people, at least, were kept in awe of the rudely-formed old chair. I wonder Helen didn't tell you."

"Why, of course, they all told us, mother, and what is more, most of us knew it as well as they did, but *we* only laughed at the idea of the old stone seat being 'unlucky' (as it was called), and I believe the ill-repute in which it stood served to excite our interest in the unsightly though venerable relic."

"Well! the appointed evening came, and so did the Earl of Milhaven, and his three daughters, Lady Harriet, Lady Lucy and Lady Elizabeth. Lady Susan was, of course, *chez nous* with us, and had been staying for weeks before at Castle Mahon. The Countess had died some three years before, and I believe the still handsome and attractive Earl would fain have installed one of us girls in that distinguished position, but it so happened that neither of us had any ambition to wear a coronet or win a place in the next edition of the Peerage. His only son, Lord Brereton, was then at Cambridge, so the gay father of the family when at home—which he generally was when the House of Lords was not in session—to do him justice, Lord Milhaven was never an absentee from choice—took upon himself, nothing loath, I fancy, the task of escorting his daughters

whither they would—and especially, as I said, to Castle Mahon.”

“Can the leopard change his spots, or the camel his skin?” muttered the attentive listener. “But pray go on, Bertha!”

Bertha did not go on, at least immediately; she sat with her eyes fixed on vacancy, and a strangely-mournful smile parting her delicate lips. Her mother regarded her with melancholy interest and waited patiently for her thoughts to find vent in words.

“It *was* a lovely night,” said Bertha at length very softly and half-abstractedly, “the yellow harvest moon was above us broad and bright, looking down placidly on *us* mummers, as she had two thousand years before on the real Druids. The scene was in the highest degree picturesque, when our party, some twelve in number, assembled on the green slope, each muffled in a large cloak, the hood of which was thrown over the head, so as partially to conceal the features. I forgot to mention that Captain, then Mr. Bellew, was of the party, and he appeared as a Druid priest, robed in white, and crowned with mistletoe, with a silver crescent glittering amongst the dark leaves over his brow. He looked well, it is true, though wanting the stern dignity appropriate to the character. Lady Susan would fain have had Mr. Montague figure in the sacerdotal costume, but he laughingly declined the honor in favor of his friend Gerald, who seemed rather to desire it. At another time I might dwell more

on the dramatic features of the scene and the solemn beauty of the hour and the place, the stillness unbroken by any sound—I might tell you of the somewhat ludicrous figure dear Uncle Gerald cut as he stumped heavily along, with his stout form enveloped in the Druid's cloak, and he trying hard to drill his rebellious feet to the slow, gliding step which became his assumed character. But I cannot now pause for description—I must on to the part which concerns myself, and which you, I know, most desire to hear." She stopped a moment—pressed her hand on her eyes, and then went on in a hurried tone as though anxious to get through with a painful task:

"Her ladyship was installed in her seat of office, the Druid's chair, namely,—and oh! how bewitchingly beautiful she was, when throwing back the deep hood from her face, the moonbeams fell full on her garland-crowned head, and her arch, spiritual features, lit up with some inward emotion or idea, that was altogether undefinable. Part of her office was, as previously agreed upon, to tell each one's fortune, *à la clairvoyante*, and it was amusing to see the different effect of her pretended vaticinations on each, as we all advanced in turn from the circle in which we stood, some yards distant, and bowing low, knelt before the inspired Druidess to hear our doom pronounced. The eiders were all laughing as they resumed their places in the semicircle, except the Earl, who looked slightly annoyed, Bellew and

Eveleen were a *little* grave, and the three fair sisters of the *clairvoyante* pouting, and muttering some saucy retort between their teeth. When Montague advanced with stately step, and bowing with lofty grace, knelt before the chair, I could see, or at least thought I could, a change passing over the lovely face of the priestess, though her eyes were closed, or seemed to be. Bending slowly forward, she pronounced a few words in a very low voice, her lips scarcely moving, and her eyes still closed. I saw Montague start, and when he arose to return to his place, though the hood was drawn farther yet over his face, I saw he was ghastly pale. It was my turn to advance, for I chanced to be the last, and, whether it was that strange presentiment of evil that sometimes chills the heart with a sudden fear, or the consciousness that Lady Susan was in some mysterious way connected with my fate, I felt my heart sink, and my strength fail, as I knelt in the place of doom.

“ ‘What wouldst thou of me?’ said the priestess in a deep voice. This startled me still more, for she had questioned none of the others.

“ ‘Knowledge,’ I faintly answered, willing to play my part.

“ ‘Thou shalt have it!’ said the deep low voice again, and bending her head close to mine, the priestess spoke in a hissing whisper :

“ ‘Think not of Montague—he is pledged to another! That lovely child whose image you admired

the other day is Edith Montague—*his* child, by one whom I care not to name. Go, now, but breathe not a word of that to mortal, for I would not have *his* anger, now, that I am so soon to become a member of his family !

“ ‘ Is he then, married ? ’ I asked with a sort of spasmodic effort.

“ ‘ Married !—no ! ’ And a low scoffing laugh escaped her parted lips.

“ ‘ My God ! ’ murmured Madam Von Wiegel, “ it was for just such a cause I broke off my engagement with his father ! ”

“ The words and the laugh rang in my ears,” went on Bertha as if scarcely noticing the interruption, “ and smote my heart like a knell ; how I got back to my place I know not, but I have a faint recollection of Montague advancing to meet me—probably seeing the faintness that was on me—I believe I motioned him away with my hand, and walked, as best I could, to the place I had left. Fortunately none of the others had noticed my agitation, and I know not, indeed, whether Montague did, or whether he attributed my tottering steps to a sudden faintness—in either case he made no subsequent allusion to it. Indeed, from that hour forward, we were strangers to each other,—the friendly inter-communion of thought that had existed between us, existed no longer. I know not if he suspected what Lady Susan had told me, but there was a consciousness in his manner ever after that convinced me of

the truth of what I had heard, and steeled my heart against him. Oh mother! the misery of that hour when I first learned to think of *him*—of Edgar Montague—as a libertine—he whom I had thought so pure in heart, so noble in mind, so far removed from any of the degrading vices of sensuality!”

“But, my dearest child!” said her mother, “did he never make any attempt to exculpate himself—I know, of course, that you could not allude to the subject in any way, seeing that he had never——”

“‘Never talked of love!’ said Bertha, quoting Goldsmith, “why, my dear mother, not only did he never talk of it, but I had no tangible reason for supposing that he ever felt it—for me, at least. But you ask me if he never made any attempt at explanation—no, not even a hint in that direction crossed his lips. I noticed, indeed, that he was more reserved with Lady Susan after that night, but his high-bred courtesy was still the same to her—to me—to all. Gradually—very gradually—he withdrew himself from our circle, and at last it came that we rarely saw him at all. He went to Madrid, thence to Malta, where his uncle Sir —— was Governor at the time; between the two places he spent a whole summer, and when he returned to Dunmore, we—that is Aunt Helen, Uncle Walter, Eveleen and I—were in Paris, I believe, on our way to Rome, Uncle Gerald having insisted on our going abroad before the season was further advanced. The next thing I heard of Montague was that he had

purchased a commission in the army—and Gerald Bellew soon after followed his example.”

“ And Lady Susan ? ”

“ Oh ! as for her,” said Bertha with bitter emphasis, “ I have little doubt but she quietly laughed in her sleeve at us all. Whatever passed between herself and Montague in private I cannot, of course, say, but to all outward appearance her manner towards him was just the same as ever, notwithstanding his apparent coldness which was, I suppose, but temporary, and, perhaps, only assumed. At times I could detect a deeper shade of feeling lurking under the graceful levity with which she addressed him, but I know not if others noticed it as I did—I rather think they did not.”

“ But did you never question her as to the particulars of her charge against Mr. Montague ? ”

“ To tell you the truth, mother ! I did not. I often, very often wished to do so, but when it came to the point, the words seemed to die away on my lips, and I shrank from making any inquiry of *her* with regard to Montague. Oh ! no ! no ! any one on earth but Lady Susan Blackwood. Nor did she ever again refer to the subject. Once, indeed, she mentioned, as if quite casually, that little Edith Montague was eight years old, and was then at school in Madrid. We were not alone at the time, or I might possibly have been tempted to ask a question or two in relation to this Edith ; as it was, I affected to take no notice, as Lady Susan had not addressed

herself specially to me. It struck me as rather a singular thing to send the child to school all the way to Madrid, but the unhappy circumstances of her birth in part accounted for the oddness of the choice, as Montague would, of course, be anxious to have her as far as possible out of the way. But oh! mother, how can I tell you the anguish, the shame, the mortification which I endured for months after I had heard the dreary news. It was hard to think of *him*—him so high-souled, so noble, so generous—in such a connection as that, and, of course, as a Christian, I could nowise justify, or even extenuate such flagrant immorality. Even as the *friend* he had been, the agreeable companion, Edgar Montague was no longer a fit associate for our circle, and yet how *could* I have hinted such a thing to the others who still believed him what his fair seeming indicated. How happy I was, then, and what a weight was lifted from my secret heart when he withdrew himself, as I told you he did, from our circle, and finally left Ireland for Spain."

"But Lady Susan—were she and Lord Dunmore married?"

"Married!" said Bertha, with keen irony; "no, indeed, mother! they were not. I believe the Viscount found out by some means that Lady Susan was in the habit of ridiculing his disfigured countenance to her confidential friends, and, of course, the Montague blood took fire, and he informed her ladyship by letter that having reason to suppose

that she repented of their engagement, self-respect would not permit him to enforce his claim to her fair hand, which he, therefore, begged respectfully to resign in favor of some worthier and more attractive aspirant. Whatever Lady Susan's family might have thought of this apparently cavalier treatment, there were no public steps taken to show their displeasure, possibly because the politic earl deemed it the wiser course to submit in silence, rather than furnish a nine days' wonder for the fashionable world by suing Lord Dunmore for breach of promise. Indeed, Lady Susan and the whole family contrived to impress the public mind with the idea that it was she, not Lord Dunmore, who had seceded from the contract, and to show how well pleased she was at its dissolution, she got up a very marked flirtation with a certain Scotch baronet, a widower of middle age, who had lately purchased an estate in the neighborhood. Finding, I suppose, that he was somewhat dilatory in declaring his intentions, she accepted, probably, in desperation, the hand and fortune of Sir Henry Burke."

"Sir Henry Burke!" exclaimed Madam Von Wiegel, "why, he is as old as I am, if not older. It must be the same person, for I never heard of my old acquaintance being married—nor yet dying."

"It is the same Sir Henry, mother! I have heard Aunt Helen and my uncles speak many a time of his odd ways and his inextinguishable foppery."

"Why, what a match for the young and beautiful

daughter of an earl!" said Madam Von Wiegel in surprise. "What could have induced her to marry *him*—she, of all people,—so brilliant and so admired?"

"As I have already intimated, my dear mother, she must have married him in a fit of spleen, and because he was the first that asked her after her disappointment."

"Well! and what has become of her since?—how have she and Sir Henry agreed?"

"Tolerably well, I believe; indeed there is but one will between them, for Sir Henry would as soon think of taking Nelson's Pillar or the London Monument on his back as opposing any wish or disputing any command of my Lady Paramount. They have been travelling most of the time since their marriage, now some four or five years ago, but what will you say when I tell you that they are now in this city?"

"In this city! is it possible?" and Madam Von Wiegel looked musingly down at the carpet.

"It is not only possible but true!—I saw their names on the list of arrivals by the Havre packet the day before yesterday. Now is it *not* a remarkable coincidence, to say the least of it, that Lady Susan should arrive in New York at this particular time—New York, of all places?"

"I know not, my dear," said her mother still in the same thoughtful tone; "it certainly does look somewhat strange—but still it may be pure acci-

dent—stranger things than that, you know, do happen by chance.”

Bertha shook her head. “You see neither of the gentlemen came this evening, as they had promised.”

“The promise was only conditional, Bertha. Still I must own the whole affair is rather suspicious. But, then, suppose, Major Montague and Captain Bellew did call on Lady Susan—when they found she had arrived—it was nothing more than common courtesy and good feeling required, seeing that she is, after all, a very old acquaintance!” Madam Von Wiegel spoke in rather a hesitating tone, as if she were trying to combat even her own conviction.

“Nothing in the world would be more natural or more decorous,” rejoined Bertha, “in an ordinary case—but this is not an ordinary case, my dear mother, but altogether *extra-ordinary*. Now I know not whether Major Montague may call on us again previous to his departure—although his high-bred courtesy would scarcely permit him to dispense with that act of common politeness—and if he should call, it is not very probable that he will give me an opportunity of alluding to this painful subject—and hence I shall have no alternative but believe him guilty—very, very guilty!—and that, too, when I was almost daring to hope that he might not be so black as Lady Susan would have had me believe. Now there is no hope—and I feel, my dearest mother, with that crushing conviction on my

mind, as if I had seen with my own eyes another bright intelligence fall from the spheres above."

"But, my dear Bertha!" said her mother tenderly smoothing back with her hand the rich mass of dark hair that shaded her daughter's queenly brow, "my dear Bertha! you surely could not think of squandering your heart's affection on one whose moral character you have strong reason to doubt—one who, moreover"—she paused, and seemed at a loss how to continue.

"I know what you would say, mother!" said Bertha with a mournful smile, "one who never said he loved. Well! my dearest mother," and she rose as she spoke, "*I* do not say I love *him*—and be assured that even if I had loved him as never woman loved man, let me once be *convinced* of his depravity, and I would tear his image from my heart, though the heart should break in the effort."

There was a dazzling light in Bertha's eyes, and a burning glow on her cheek as she spoke these emphatic words, and the fond mother murmured to herself as she gazed through blinding tears at her daughter, "Were virtue incarnate in mortal form, the embodied spirit might bear such a semblance! God bless you, my sweet daughter!" she said aloud, "I have no fear but He will, and bring you unscathed through the trials and vicissitudes and temptations of this weary life! I think I may now prepare for bed."

"Do you feel better or worse, mother, now that you have heard all?" inquired Bertha earnestly.

"Neither better nor worse, Bertha!" was the reply, "but much surprised, and sorely puzzled. It is so strange that his father and I should have parted on the same grounds that—that induced you to—to shrink from further intercourse with him."

Another half hour and the inmates of Rheinfeldt House were, or, at least, seemed to be, sunk in calm repose.

But there were two hearts there wakeful and unquiet. Bertha was thinking of the little probability there was that the hopes she had once cherished were ever now to be realized; dim and faint, as in a far off vision they appeared to her mind, rather as belonging to the past than the present. She was schooling her mind into submission, and sought, but vainly, to realize what her feelings would be when even the last faint ray of hope had faded, and the brightest charm of life was gone. "Now that I have seen him," she said, communing with her own sad thoughts, "now that I have seen him again and again, moving amongst us like a being from some higher sphere, as far beyond ordinary mortals, in the endowments of mind as in the graces of person and manner—the possibility of his being what I had once been led to believe seemed to have diminished very sensibly—and then—there were moments when I almost thought his feelings towards me were such as I had long ago ventured to imagine,—but now the

light of hope is well nigh gone, and scarcely the far-off speck remains for me that guided Sinbad through his dreary prison-cave. Perhaps I may see him no more—but if I do, it must be to-morrow or next day, and then the die will be cast one way or the other.”

Her mother's thoughts were not much more soothing. She had had her experience of the Montagues, and could not help fearing that Edgar had inherited those dangerous propensities and that laxity of morals, the discovery of which in his father had turned her heart away from him, and changed the love of years into coldness and contempt. “How unfortunate, how very unfortunate it is!” was her mental soliloquy, “how very unfortunate it is that Bertha should have met him in her girlish years under circumstances so favorable to the display of his uncommon attractions—and how still more unfortunate that the acquaintance so abruptly broken off in Ireland was renewed here—here under my very eyes!—God protect my child from evil! God direct her for the best!” This was her last thought—her last prayer as her eyes closed in a troubled slumber, and then her sleeping fancy wandered away through the hazy scenes of dreamland, and forms from the past flitted before her; the Ritter Von Wiegel was there regarding her with a look of anxious solicitude, and Henry Montague was there, not the dignified peer of later years—as such she had hardly seen him in life—but the boyish companion of her earlier years, the first love of

her young heart. . Yes ! he was there in the brightness of " youth's early promise " as she had first seen and loved him when " the spring-time of joy " was speeding on, and

" Hearts were light,
And eyes were bright,
In the summer days when *they* were young."

All at once, however, a dark shade flitted over the fair scene—a change came over Montague's face and form—the thunder was heard growling in the distance, the lightning flashed, and the dreamer felt a cold hand laid on her arm—she knew it was her husband's, though his features were but dimly seen as he drew her away, and other scenes opened before her.



CHAPTER XIX.

DECIDEDLY HYMENEAL.

THE Gallaghers are still at Saratoga, but as we have neither time nor inclination to follow them thither, we shall take the opportunity of paying a visit to the Fogarty mansion—indeed, we have neglected the family too long, and are only sorry we have not much time to devote to them now.

Contrary to general expectation—for general expectation is generally prone to rash judgment—the advent of Mrs. Edward Fogarty had been productive of no bad effects in the way of disturbing the family peace. Indeed, things appeared to have gone on rather better than worse since Sarah Hackett “went home” as Edward’s wife. Mrs. Fogarty, senior, though a little rough or so, as our readers may remember, was really a good, kind-hearted woman, without any whims or vagaries to annoy others round her, and quite willing to live on the best of terms with all the world, if it wasn’t the world’s own fault. It was her habit to boast, and we believe with truth, that she never had an enemy in all her life—to which William H. was also accustomed to respond when he chanced to be present: “Well! I believe you never *had*, Ellen, to tell the

truth—and I hope you'll die with the same story to tell."

It was not very likely that such a mother-in-law would have any difficulty with her son's young wife, whose amiable qualities were too genuine to fail in the trying ordeal of every-day life. Sarah and her mother-in-law were invariably the best of friends, but Julia was a little more difficult to "get along with," as Sarah sometimes added to Edward. Julia was older than Edward—the oldest of the family she was except Samuel, and having now reached the sober age of seven or eight-and-twenty she was beginning—there is no denying it—to *feel* that she was verging on the dreaded time of old-maidenhood, and what was worse, to make others round her feel it, too—not that Julia was unamiable, or by nature peevish or irritable—no such thing—as a general thing she was good-tempered and agreeable, and possessed a remarkable share of that valuable quality, commonly called common sense; but then there was, certainly, and for the reason above assigned, an occasional fit of discontent visible in Julia's manner and a shade of it on her clear brown face that was not satisfactory to those with whom she lived.

In general things went on smoothly enough between the sisters-in-law, notwithstanding that Julia *was* like her namesake in the song "a little pekkooliar," for Sarah knew how to humor her when the

fit was on her, and that was never long, for Julia was never dark or sullen.

If there was any one thing that annoyed Julia Fogarty more than another it was the airs of superiority and condescension assumed by the Gallagher girls towards herself personally. Some of them, moreover, were in the habit of twitting her on the increasing possibility of her being consigned forever and a day to the state commonly called of single blessedness, and even Fanny, although her senior by a couple of years, was not behind the others in dealing out such hints and inuendos for Julia's benefit.

"Just to think of Fanny's talking so!" said Julia to her sister-in-law who was her only confidant in such matters, "I'm sure she hasn't so many chances herself in her favor, or many more strings to her bow than I have myself. Do you think she has e'er a one at all, Sarah?"

"Well, of course, *I* can't say how many or how few she has," laughed Mrs. Edward, "but, for one, I rather think, she counts on McConoghy."

"And do you think she has any chance of *him*?"

Sarah shook her head as if she didn't know, because she didn't choose to say what she *did* know.

"Well! I declare, I'd give five dollars to know," went on Julia, "for if Fanny hasn't McConoghy in her eye she can't have anybody else, and if I was only sure about that-I could pay her back when she talks to *me*."

"What are you about, girls, what are you about?" said Mrs. Fogarty suddenly throwing open the door, 'I wish you'd come and give a hand down stairs till we get something made for tea—here it's five o'clock and there isn't a thing done, and what do you think but Mr. McConoghy is coming for tea——"

"Who says so, ma?" inquired Julia.

"Why, your father says so—come, come, don't wait to ask any more questions—you see Sarah is off already."

Many hands, they say, make light work, and so the tea was ready in good time, and a well-spread table awaited the coming of six o'clock and Mr. McConoghy. The hour came and the man, and so, of course, did William H. and his sons Edward and Willy; the meal was in all respects a pleasant one, and Mr. McConoghy was remarkably blithe and cheerful, and cracked jokes *apropos* to everything, and flung them around in all directions. Amongst other items of news he informed the company that he had serious thoughts of changing his way of life.

"As how?" questioned the host; "do you mean to go housekeeping?"

"That's just what I mean, if I can only get the housekeeper."

"Hear him now!" said Edward laughingly, "as if he hadn't one ready to his hand. And a good housekeeper she is, too, John! for her mother is the very woman to make sure of that. Our Sam thinks

there a'nt a better manager in New York than *his* wife."

"Manager be shot!" politely ejaculated McConoghy; "it's little *their* management will put to the fore for a man, so long as they spend on dress fifty times more than they save! That's what *I* call left-handed management!"

"Fie, fie, Mr. McConoghy!" said Mrs. Edward with a smile and a reproving gesture; "it's well somebody we know is not within hearing—if she were, you'd have a different story to tell."

"Fie, fie, yourself, Mrs. Edward!" rejoined McConoghy in a half serious tone, "you know well enough how that matter stands—there's another not far off now, that I'd rather have had than e'er a one of them, but—ahem! it's a folly to talk, Edward Fogarty, you have a great deal to answer for!" And he heaved an extra-heavy sigh, and turned up the whites of his eyes most dolorously.

"Why, dear me, Mr. McConoghy," said matter-of-fact Mrs. Fogarty, "what's your trouble now?—isn't Fanny to the good yet?"

"She is,—*and will be*, ma'am!" responded John, as soon as the laugh that echoed round the table had somewhat subsided. "Miss Fanny is an article that's likely to keep, Mrs. Fogarty!—"

"To keep *house*, eh?"

"Ha! ha! Mr. Fogarty! you thought you had me there—but you took me up before I fell. Ladies!" said John, as if not unwilling to change the conver-

sation, "I brought you tickets for the Excursion to Jones' Wood for —— Church—but I don't know if you'll accept them on the condition of me going with you."

"Oh! as for that," said Mrs. Fogarty, "we'll be glad enough to have you with us, John; but we've got tickets already—William is one of the managers of the Excursion, and, I believe, he took a dozen of the tickets. We're obliged •to *you* all the same, though."

"You needn't thank him, mother," said Edward with assumed gravity, "a lady in Saratoga is but poor company for a gent in New York."

"Deuce take Saratoga!" cried McConoghy with real vexation, "I wish it was in Jericho,—and—ahem! *the lady* with it!"

Sarah smiled and looked significantly at Edward, and Edward coughed slightly and glanced at Julia, who was looking as demure as could be.

In the course of the evening Mr. McConoghy paid his court particularly to Mrs. Fogarty, senior, and, amongst other agreeable things, told her in quite a confidential tone, that he hadn't seen anywhere a more discreet young woman than Miss Fogarty, who was a credit to them that brought her up—to which he afterwards added that Julia was a favorite name of his, on account of his mother, God rest her soul! for *her* name was Julia—Julia McBride. Mrs. Fogarty was, of course, highly pleased with the delicate little touch of flattery in regard to the bringing up of Julia, and

showed her satisfaction by making John McConoghy acquainted with sundry good offers that Julia had had, but somehow she didn't seem to care for accepting any of them—she (Mrs. Fogarty) couldn't tell what to make of her refusing such very good offers, but she supposed her time wasn't come—or the right man hadn't made his appearance. To this latter possibility John acceded in perfect good faith, perhaps wondering whether *he* might have a chance of being the right man, in case he made his appearance.

At all events, appear he did in the character of Julia's humble servant, dating from the day of the Excursion, on which occasion he had the honor of making one, and a prominent one, too, in the Fogarty party—danced two sets of quadrilles with Julia “under the greenwood tree,” and, what was still more desirable, for a gentleman wanting a house-keeper, had the honor of the same young lady's company, and her arm within his, for a promenade (through the crowd) most part of the afternoon, to the agreeable surprise of some, the disagreeable surprise of others, and the setting in motion of a score or two of tongues.

It must be acknowledged that Julia Fogarty, over and above other considerations of personal advantage, did estimate Mr. McConoghy's attentions as a triumph over Fanny Gallagher, excusing the uncharitable feeling to herself by the patent fact that said Fanny was the very lady that triumphed over

every one else on the slightest possible opportunity. So Julia thought, and perhaps not unjustly, that it was only fair to give her back tit for tat.

The upshot of all this may be inferred. Just three weeks after the Excursion to Jones' Wood, Julia Fogarty exchanged vows at the altar with John McConoghy, and after the wedding breakfast the happy couple set out for Philadelphia, where they purposed spending a few days before they commenced housekeeping, which John declared must be very soon, as he had set his heart on having a home and a fireside before he was many weeks older.

Tom Gallagher went to Church by invitation to see his friend "spliced," and after partaking of the wedding breakfast, and contributing largely to the general hilarity of the company, went across with the Fogartys, father and sons, to the Southern railroad depot in Jersey City, to see the new-married pair fairly started. Who should he find there but Atty Garrell waiting to shake hands with Mr. McConoghy, and wish him joy of his morning's work.

All were surprised to see Atty, and when McConoghy did shake hands with him at parting, he leaned over and whispered in his ear :

"Good-bye, Atty ! good-bye !—you see I'm good-natured after all. *I'll leave Miss Fanny for you !*"

"Goodness gracious, Mr. McConoghy ! what a thing for you to say !" ejaculated Atty, his thin face all over blushing as he retreated behind the portly figure of Tom Gallagher.

The conductor's whistle gave the alarm—hands were hurriedly shaken through the window and “good-byes” exchanged,—the great iron-horse snorted fiercely, then started away on his lightning journey—the cars started after him, and Mr. and Mrs. John McConoghy were

“Off, off and away,”

on the hymeneal road, and let us hope that—

“——— their guiding star was the bright star of love.”

But the marriage, though bright enough for them, was anything but bright for Fanny Gallagher when the news reached her at Saratoga. In fact it was so wholly unexpected, so far beyond the range of her calculation, that it came on poor Miss Fanny with the force of a shower-bath at a temperature many degrees below zero, and she literally gasped for breath, whereupon Miss Mag, ever ready on such occasions, seized a palm-leaf fan that lay on the table for general use, and commenced fanning her most unmercifully, whilst Ellie, equally on the alert, came at a wink from Mag, and held a smelling bottle to her nose with great appearance of anxiety touching her bodily health. These sisterly attentions, I regret to say, were *not* appreciated by the senior Miss Gallagher, who dashed down the fan with one hand and the smelling-bottle with the other, and opened such a cannonade on the juniors that they were fain to run away laughing, with their hands on their ears to shut out the inharmonious

sounds, turning back at the door, however, to offer their respective condolence for Fanny's great loss.

The disconsolate Miss Gallagher was exceeding wroth at this, and called after them, "just wait now—just wait till I tell ma!—you'll hear what she'll say!" But the incorrigible pair were already tripping along the passage to where their mother was sitting on a balcony in full dress with some other New York fashionables—the news burning their tongues, doubtless, till they got it safely delivered.

"Well! but in earnest, Mag, what do you think of it?" whispered Ellie by the way.

"Think of it! why, of course, I don't think well of it—the idea of that prim old thing, Julia Fogarty, getting off before us, and Sarah Hackett, too!—I tell you I don't like it one bit—that's *entre nous*, you know!"

"Well! *we must only look sharp*, said Ellie pointedly, lowering her voice at the same time; "if we miss this chance we may hang on like Fan—that's all!"

What the chance was, Mag and Ellie only knew at the time, but Tom Gallagher knew it a week after in his lonely mansion in New York when he received by post a joint letter from Mag and Ellie apprising him that they were to be married on the same day—the Tuesday of the following week—with *ma's full consent*, to two Southern gentlemen who were the owners of ever so large plantations, and scores of niggers, somewhere

“Way down in the Carolina States.”

Tom was very, very angry—for him—on reading this singular announcement—had he listened to the promptings of his vexed spirit he would have gone “right off to Saratoga” and taken the “womankind” home bag and baggage. But, of course, he could not take any such important step without consulting his right-hand man, or rather his oracle, Atty Garrell, and, of course, Atty was not in such a passion as he was, and consequently had his wits about him, so he reasoned Tom out of the proposed midnight excursion, and succeeded in proving to his satisfaction that a letter would answer the same purpose without taking him away from his business. The letter was to be written next day without fail, but when next day came it proved to be an extra-busy day, and when Tom went home at night he was too tired to sit down to the onerous task—always tedious to him—of inditing a letter, so he put it off till the day after, and although it was written the day after, it was posted just half an hour too late to go that day, though Tom didn’t know that it *was* late, and naturally thought all was right. He and Atty smoked their cigars together that night with great comfort, and, on the part of Tom, with great complacency, supposing, of course, that he had sent the Southern planters to the right about. “Southern planters, indeed!” quoth he to Atty as he watched “the smoke that so gracefully curled” from his fragrant Havana, “I’d plant them if they’d go on with

any such nonsense!—at least I'd plant my money where them lads wouldn't get their hands on it!—and I think it's *that* they want, more than wives, the schemers! Well, Atty, it's a folly to talk!—women never *ought* to have their own way—now, if I had had *my* way, they wouldn't have been at Saratoga at all—for, to tell you the truth, I think it's no place for the likes of them! Howsomever, Atty! I think we've forbid the bans in time, and that's the main point now!"

"Of course it is," said Atty, "and I hope we're all right!"

They weren't all right, however, for the very day the ladies were expected home again, instead of themselves came to Tom Gallagher the Saratoga paper containing amongst other items of news the following:

"Married, in the Catholic Church, Saratoga, on Tuesday morning, July 10th, by the Rev. Father ———, Jerome F. Winter, Esq., of Cucumberville, S. C., to Ellen T., third daughter, and on the same day, by the same Rev. gentleman, Ruben R. W Frost, Esq., Lemonvale, S. C., to Margaret Ann, fourth daughter of Thomas Gallagher, Esq., of New York City."

Now placid as our friend Tom was on ordinary occasions, he *could* be stirred up to honest, genuine anger, and, when he read the above precious "item," I tell you frankly he *was* angry and very angry. Too angry indeed for words, for his heart swelled

within him till he thought it would burst, and he felt a choking sensation about the throat that stopped the words which rose to his lips. But it was not all anger that shook his strong frame as he leaned his elbows on the table and covered his face with his hands. Grief was heavy at his heart, and Atty Garrell knew that well, and applied himself to offer consolation in the best way he could. After leaving his patron for some moments to the indulgence of the several emotions that swelled within him, Atty approached in his quiet way and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Mr. Gallagher!" said Atty, "I wouldn't take on so if I was you. I would not, sir! It may all turn out for the best, and sure, at any rate, it isn't so bad but what it might be worse."

"I tell you it's bad enough, Atty," was the dogged reply of Tom without raising his head. "I'd rather see them in their graves, the ungrateful hussies! for then I'd be done with the trouble of them, and besides I could grieve for them with all the love of a father's heart—but now, Atty!—oh God help me!"

"Why, my goodness! matters can't be so bad as you think," said Atty; "sure Mrs. Gallagher is a sharp, sensible woman, and do you think she'd be the fool to give her consent to the two matches if she wasn't full sure of them being good ones?"

Hearing this, Tom raised his head so suddenly that Atty started back. "Mrs. Gallagher be hanged!"

he exclaimed so fiercely that Atty drew still farther back, whereat Tom laughed, with all his anger. "God forgive me for saying such a word!" said he, but as true as God's in heaven, Atty Garrell! that woman is enough to ruin any family of children, and she makes a fool of herself and fools of them girls of hers every day she rises out of her bed. It's her and not *them* I blame for this, come of it what may."

"There won't come any bad of it," put in Atty very timidly, "you'll see there won't, Mr. Gallagher."

"Don't tell me, Atty!—I know there will—it's as plain to me as the nose on *your* face. They're a pair of sharpers—idle loafers, and nothing else. And just look at the names they've got." Referring again to the paper, he read aloud "Jerome F. *Winter*, of Cucumberville, no less, South Carolina—(that's what S. C. stands for, you know), and Ruben R. W. *Frost*, of Lemonvale, S. C. There's names for you! Winter and Frost! why Brown and Green wasn't half so bad as that! Now, Atty Garrell! there's two things to be said about that," pointing with his finger to the ominous paragraph in the Saratoga paper.

"Well, sir?" said Atty, seeing that his patron paused.

"It's my opinion that them aren't the fellows' names at all—now mark that——"

"I will, sir!"

"Nonsense, man! I didn't ask you whether you would or not. I told you to *do* it—but whether or

not, they'll turn out *Winter* and *Frost* for the fools they have got their grip on. *They'll* freeze them, I'll go bail for it—they will, and only it would be wrong to say it, I'd say for my part, so be it—but I'll not say it—no, no—no, no! their bed will be hard enough without a father's curse to the back of all! But oh! oh! what a foolish mother does!—God forgive Ellen! she'll have a power to answer for!—and do you know, Atty!" he added with an anxious, thoughtful look, "I'm not sure but I'm to blame myself as well as her."

"Ah then, why would you think that, Mr. Gallagher?"

"Why, because, Atty! if I hadn't given her and the girls so much of the tether as I did all along they couldn't have got on with such vagaries. Now for instance, if I hadn't let them go to that unlucky Saratoga, *Winter* and *Frost* wouldn't have come—come in their way. Well! I did it for the best, anyhow!—it was for peace-sake I gave in,—and nothing else. Ah! many another foolish thing I've let them do for the same reason! I wish to God I hadn't! However, there's no use in fretting now—what's done, I suppose, can't be *undone*, and we must only bear the burden the best way we can! But oh, Atty Garrell! Atty Garrell! it's a hard thing to see your family taking the reins out of your hands, and driving—to the devil! God pardon me! I hope you'll never know what a sore heart I have this present hour!"

The agitated father then hurried away to tell Eliza of what had happened, and consult with her and her husband as to what was best to be done. Samuel shook his head and looked grave, but Eliza was quite elated.

"Two Southern planters! well! that *was* something—not all as one!" and she looked so meaningly at her husband that he couldn't choose but take the hint, which he did with a smile peculiar to himself.

"Well, pa!" went on Eliza, "what are we going to do?"

"Whatever you think of doing, you may do yourself," said Tom, "for I wash my hands of the whole business—I had nothing to do with it first, and you may take my word for it, I'll have nothing to do with it last."

"Why, pa, that will never do!—you know they may be here to-morrow morning—in fact, any hour—of course, they'll all stay at 66, for some time, at least, till they can get houses to suit them?"

This was spoken rather in a tone of inquiry, but Tom answered very quickly: "Of course they will *not* stay at 66—no, not for one night! I suppose, my two damsels, and your mother to boot, counted on that, but if they did they'll find themselves under a mistake—Ha! ha! ha! I'll let them see that I can be master of my own house—when I take the notion. You can ask them here if you like!" he added with a comical look at Samuel, who seemed

to enjoy Eliza's trouble, though he did not care to say so.

"Nonsense, pa! how could *I* ask them?" said Eliza tartly—"why, we've only one spare room in the house."

"Very well, then, let them go to a hotel." And that was Tom's last word, as he left the house followed by Samuel.

That night about eleven o'clock there was a loud and long-continued ringing at Tom Gallagher's door-bell. For some time it received no response, but at last Ally Brady put her head out of an upper window, and asked "Who's there?"

"It's me, Ally," said the well-known voice of Mrs. Gallagher, "be quick and open the door—why, I thought you were all dead."

"I can't open the door, ma'am! the master told me not on any account to do it."

"Come down this instant!" cried the excited Mrs. Gallagher; do you mean to say I'm not to get into my own house?"

"Don't blame me, ma'am," expostulated Ally "you know I'd go on my head to let you in, but the master told me I musn't do it—he said the door was not to be opened this night."

Mrs. Gallagher was speechless with anger. Fanny laughed bitterly but said nothing, Annie and Janie began to cry, but the two brides, partly guessing how matters stood, suggested to their mother that

it was better to go at once to a hotel, a proposal which was warmly seconded by their respective lords and masters.

"Go to a hotel!" repeated Mrs. Gallagher with a toss of her head, and a stamp of her foot, "I'll do no such a thing!—I must and will get in!—do you think I'm going to be turned away from my own door like a beggar?"

"For God's sake go quietly, ma'am!" said Ally from above, "you may as well do it soon as sudden!"

The window was suddenly closed, evidently not by Ally Brady, and Mrs. Gallagher saw at once that no alternative remained—to a hotel the whole party went, trunks, bandboxes, packing-cases and all.

Fanny laughed louder than politeness warranted—the Southern planters declared it a very strange proceeding, and their wives apologized by saying that Pa was very queer at times, and did not like to be disturbed in his night's rest.



CHAPTER XX.

LIGHT ON THE PICTURE.

"BERTHA, my dear!" said Madam Von Wiegel on the morning after the *eclaircissement*, "what are you going to do about Lady Susan?"

"As how, mother?" and Bertha started at the name.

"Why in regard to calling on her. Of course, etiquette requires that you should, and yet——"

"Your *yet* anticipates my objections, mother," said Bertha; "I know it is my duty to call on her ladyship in consideration of our former acquaintance, and besides I have really no sufficient cause for cutting the connection—at least nothing tangible—still I own I cannot bring myself with any sort of good grace to associate with her on equal terms. It may be that she forgets all about my being in New York—if, indeed, she ever heard of it—and it may also be," she added after a moment's pause, "that the renewal of our acquaintance would be anything but agreeable to her. In any case I will wait a day or two longer."

Her mother smiled. "The *ides* are *come*, Bertha! and you would not see this formidable personage till they are *gone*?—have I guessed aright?"

"In part you have, my dear mother, but the

reason I have already assigned is the principal one that deters me from doing in this case what common courtesy would require. I presume Major Montague and Captain Bellew have been to pay their *devoirs* yesterday evening."

"It is quite probable," said Madam Von Wiegel thoughtfully; then, as if to change the subject, she suddenly added, "Poor Robert Murray! to-day he leaves again!—I am almost sorry he came when his stay is necessarily so short. Of course, he will come to bid us good-bye."

"I should think he would," said Bertha with a faint smile, and then the subject dropped.

The hours of that day dragged heavily along. Mr. Murray called in the forenoon, and said that Robert would call on his way to the cars. "I believe he almost shrinks from coming at all," said the old man with a serious and anxious look very different from the vivacious cheerfulness of his wonted manner. "Bertha!" said he, as if by a sudden impulse, "is there no hope for Robert?—must we all give up, once and for ever, the hopes we had so cherished?—Madam Von Wiegel! can *you* do nothing in the way of bringing Bertha back to reason?"

"Back, Mr. Murray?" repeated Bertha with emphasis.

"Well! I didn't exactly mean that, you know, but—but—in short, I scarce know *what* I meant—and, by my word, Bertha Von Wiegel! I don't know what *you* mean by your present course. You'll

never get one that loves you better than Robert, and I think he is about as presentable as most men—though, to be sure, he is not a—ahem!—a Spanish Don!”

“My dear sir,” said Madam Von Wiegel, “you do not see, but *I* see and know, that you are giving pain to my daughter by pursuing this subject. May I beg that you will spare her a little more,” she added smiling, “than you seem inclined to do?”

“Certainly, madam, certainly,” said the old gentleman, his good humor being proof against almost every dart, “but I’d like to know who spares my poor boy—eh, Bertha? Well! well! shake hands, at all events!—let us be friends all round, if nothing more! I forgot to say that Alice sends her love—she would have been with me were it not for a bad headache she has got!—poor thing! she is more troubled about Robert than she cares to own, even to me!”

Madam Von Wiegel sighed and looked at her daughter, but said nothing. A hasty and silent shake-hands and Mr. Murray hurried away.

Bertha looked forward with no very pleasurable feelings to Robert’s farewell visit, and her mother delicately forbore any allusion to the subject, feeling, probably, that her interference could do no good to any of those concerned.

When Robert did make his appearance he looked pale and haggard beyond Bertha’s power to imagine. She was much distressed and inwardly

breathed a prayer for the noble-hearted young fellow whose love was so unhappily misplaced. He startled her, however, by asking, almost the first word, whether Major Montague and Captain Bellew had been there to-day. Madam Von Wiegel replied hastily in the negative.

"They called at our house this forenoon," said Robert, "immediately after my father returned from here. They have but two days longer to remain in New York." He fixed his eyes on Bertha as he spoke, and a crimson flush overspread his face as he marked the agitation which she vainly sought to control. He started to his feet.

"Bertha," said he, "I asked you once to become my wife—you refused me—and I made up my mind that I would never again breathe a word to you on the subject. I confess I have been tempted during this brief visit to break through my resolution—but I see—I *feel* that the result would be the same. Bertha! I see farther into your heart than you may suppose—I see there is not a corner in it for me, and I resign myself to the stern law of necessity. But I tell you again, as I told you once before, that a day may come when you will think of poor Robert Murray as one whose love was not lightly to be thrown away! In any case, you see me no more in the character of a suitor—all that is past—and I tell you frankly I will do what I can to efface your image from my heart, ay! though with it go the dreams of dreamy boyhood, and

“ ‘ The light that ne’er can shine again
On life’s dull stream !’

Farewell ! may *you* be happy !” He raised her hand a moment to his lips, gazed with softened eyes on the pale lovely face now drooping and bedewed with tears, then dropped the fair hand, and bowed his head a moment while Madam Von Wiegel blessed him as she would a dear son, and shaking her hand warmly hurried from the house, never once turning his head till he reached the avenue gate. Then, they who watched him from the windows could see that he did turn and take a long last gaze at the scene of so many happy hours—the centre of many a brilliant dream !

Bertha was sad, very sad to think that Robert Murray should leave them in such a desponding frame of mind—she would have advised him as a sister to submit, as a Christian should, to the manifest decree of Providence, and not to allow his feelings and affections to overcome his reason, but somehow the words had died away on her lips, and her tongue refused to utter them.

But her own heart was weary, and she dared not analyze the various emotions that kept it in perpetual unrest all those long summer hours. Thoughts many-hued and changeful as an April sky flitted across her mind, and anxious fears would make themselves felt, whilst hope had all but vanished from her darkened mind and doubt-chilled heart. Her mother watched her with tender anxiety as she

flitted like a spirit through the silent apartments in the cool dim light that found its way through the green Venetian blinds. And Bertha would smile so sweetly, so sadly when their eyes met, that it made her mother's heart ache.

"So pass'd the day, the evening fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell—"

that is to say, the time when in olden years

"The curfew toll'd the knell of parting day."

This, gentle reader, was eight o'clock in the evening, which hour in the lengthening days of early summer is just the close of day. The day had been warm and sultry, but dewy freshness came on the twilight's wings and a soft breeze was playing through the graceful branches of the linden and the larch that shaded the front of Rheinfeldt House, shaking perfume from the dewy blossoms of the lilac and laburnum and many another pale sweet flower the latest-born of spring. Bertha went to her harp, and as her fingers wandered listlessly through the strings, many a long-forgotten strain came tingling from the silver chords, like the ghosts of buried years thronging around us in the hush of night.

Madam Von Wiegel arose softly and opened the curtains, for the moon was just rising "in silver majesty," and she knew its soft radiance had power to soothe her daughter's spirit even in its darkest mood. Bertha looked round and smiled, and then

went on with the air she had been playing. No lovelier ever stirred the charmed air of evening, and as the notes sank into her own heart, she sang in a low soft voice, softer and sweeter than the music of the accompaniment, the words whose meaning they so truthfully expressed. The song may not be familiar as it ought to many of our readers, so we give it for their benefit :

“ As a beam o’er the face of the waters may glow,
While the tide runs in darkness and coldness below,
So the cheek may be tinged with a warm, sunny smile
Tho’ the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while.

“ One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o’er our joys and our woes,
To which life nothing darker or brighter can bring,
For which joy has no balm, and affliction no sting !

“ Oh ! this thought in the midst of enjoyment will stay
Like a dead, leafless branch in the summer’s bright ray ;
The beams of the warm sun play round it in vain,
It may smile in his light, but it blooms not again.”*

Her voice died gradually away, resting mournfully on the last words. All at once she heard the door open softly,—then close,—but thinking it was her mother she sat still, with the words and the music echoing through her heart ; a shadow crossed the moonlight on the floor, and Bertha looking up surprised, there stood Edgar Montague, his arms folded on his chest, and so deep a shade of sadness on his fine features that he looked almost as he did when

* *Moore’s Irish Melodies.*

Bertha saw him for the first time, and, forgetting for the moment the troubled years that had passed since then, she started to her feet and exclaimed somewhat wildly:

"Edgar—Major Montague! how is this? I did not expect to see you now."

"In that case I owe you an apology," said Montague dejectedly.

"But are you—are you alone?" she asked, glancing round. Strange! in the spacious drawing-room there were but themselves. "Where is Captain Bellew?—and my mother was here but now?"

Montague smiled as he answered: "If so, she has vanished and Gerald with her."

"Gerald!" said Bertha softly as if to herself, "the name sounds familiar—it recalls days long past."

"And it is to recall those days to your mind, Miss Von Wiegel, that I am here now," said the musical voice at her side. She started—it was the tone she had so often heard in dreams—never before even from *him*. She was composing her thoughts, however, to answer collectedly, when Montague, throwing open the glass door that led to a verandah overlooking the garden, pointed to the lovely scene without, and said: "Once more, Miss Von Wiegel, before we part, perhaps for ever, I would stand by your side for a few brief moments, as of old, and, with heaven's blue vault above us, and its myriad stars, and yon silver moon, and the stillness of the

night around, call up memories of the past, and question the mysterious future. Will you grant me this one favor?"

He took Bertha's hand, and drew her half unconsciously to herself, to the moonlit verandah, partially shaded by the overhanging branches of a spreading maple.

"Major Montague!" said Bertha, when the sense of her position impressed itself on her mind, "Major Montague," and she drew herself up, "I confess I do not understand——"

"How I have taken such a liberty—asked such a favor," put in Montague. "Will you pardon me if I say that that is because you never understood myself. There was a time when I thought you did, but that is long past." Both were silent a moment, then Montague added: "Do you remember, Bertha! I mean Miss Von Wiegel! when we stood on just such a night as this beneath the sepulchral yew in Mucruss Abbey—the others were trying to decipher the Latin inscriptions on the tombs of the old monks."

"How well *you* remember!" said Bertha with a faint smile."

"Remember! why should I not?" he asked with emphasis. "But I was speaking of the conversation that passed between us two that night on Innisfallen. I told you, then, that the star of my destiny was struggling through clouds like one that I pointed out over the lofty brow of Mangerton."

"Clouds, indeed," murmured Bertha, half abstractedly, fixing her eyes on the pale planet that was sailing across the deep blue sky in lonely majesty.

Montague looked at her a moment with that strangely-sweet smile peculiar to himself, then resumed:

"You do not seem much interested in what I am saying, Miss Von Wiegel," he said rather coldly, "have I your permission to go on?"

Bertha bowed assent, and he continued: "I told you the clouds were darkening round me, and that there were times when I almost despaired of extricating myself. You told me in a voice I can never forget, and with a look that expressed more than the words, that there was One who could and would, if I only trusted in Him, *have turned my heart from the evil way*. I was utterly confounded by the significant tone in which you spoke those words, and as soon as I recovered the use of my faculties, I was about to ask for an explanation, when *one* whom you cannot have forgotten—came and drew you away to look at something in another part of the ruins. Do you remember all that?" he added in a softer tone.

"Remember! yes, indeed I do!" said Bertha, so faintly that Montague, gently taking her hand, placed her on a rustic seat that was near, and remained standing by her side.

"Did it ever strike you, Miss Von Wiegel," he resumed, after a momentary pause, "that our con-

versations were frequently interrupted in a similar way, and by the same person ?”

“Major Montague !” cried Bertha, starting to her feet, as if impelled by some new and overpowering impulse, “Major Montague ! let me ask, once for all, what is the object of these allusions to the past ? Is it to gather information from me touching persons with whom we were then connected ? If so, I warn you, I know nothing about those persons more than *you do*—perhaps not half so much !”

“My dear Miss Von Wiegel !” said Montague with unwonted eagerness, “you seem to forget that I am leaving New York on the day after to-morrow, and that now, if ever, I must reinstate myself in your good opinion—I say *reinstate*, for I flatter myself I once stood higher in your estimation than I have done of late.”

Oh ! the wild throbbing of Bertha’s heart at that moment, but, exerting all her self-control, she forced herself to say with perfect composure :

“Admitting it to be so—what then ?”

“Bertha !”—the young lady drew back a step, and Montague, correcting himself, went on : “Miss Von Wiegel ! permit me to ask you one question, and, in the presence of God, I demand a direct answer : Were you not told something very much to my disadvantage that night at the Druid’s Chair ?—answer me, I charge you ! as you and I shall one day answer to God for our thoughts, words and actions !”

"Adjured so solemnly, I may not refuse," said Bertha, with a pallid cheek and a quivering lip; "I was told such things then and there as I never expected to have heard—of you."

"I knew it," he said with a cold bitter smile, "I knew the serpent hissed poison in your ear that night, and gave a death-blow, as she meant, to my hopes of happiness."

A flush of joy passed over Bertha's face, but Montague saw it not, he was so rapt in his own troubled thoughts. At length he turned to Bertha, and said almost sternly:

"Pray, Miss Von Wiegel! what was the nature of her ladyship's communication respecting me?"

"Major Montague!" said Bertha drawing herself up proudly, "I am not aware that you have any right to demand such information from me——"

"Demand? assuredly not!" and Montague smiled as he caught the flashing glance that spoke a spirit lofty as his own. "I do but ask it as a favor—as a special favor!" and his voice grew soft as the zephyr's sigh that was breathing amongst the foliage.

"But is it *right* for me to tell you?" Bertha asked in a hesitating manner.

"Right! why should it *not* be right? Does not justice require that the criminal hear the charge on which life or death depends?"

"There was no resisting this, and Bertha repeated, not without some embarrassment, the ominous words spoken to her on that memorable night by Lady

Susan. Montague listened in breathless attention, while Bertha spoke in a broken and hesitating voice, with a flushed cheek and downcast eyes.

"It seemed strange that Lady Susan should address such words to *me*, and what her motive was I know not, but she told me—that Mr. Montague was not free—that he was pledged to some one whom she did not care to name——"

Montague vehemently broke in: "Did she say so? had she the hardihood to say so?"

"She did—she said those very words."

"And what more did she say? Dear Miss Von Wiegel, you will not refuse to tell me?"

"She said—oh Major Montague! can this be true? She said there was some unlawful connection, and spoke—of a certain—Edith Montague——"

"Ha! and what of *her*?"

"She said," and Bertha's voice fell to a whisper, "she said she was your child, born in shame."

"*My* child! Edith Montague *my* child!" cried Montague with a look and tone that startled Bertha.

"Did Lady Susan Blackwood say that?"

"I have told you she did—why do you doubt it?"

"And did you believe her? Bertha Von Wiegel! look me in the face and say did you believe me so utterly vile as that?"

She did look up and met his passionate glance for a moment, but made no answer. Montague sighed deeply.

"You did, then, believe that monstrous calumny!"

Bertha! I will not—cannot blame you, but I am pained and surprised to think that *you* could accept such a picture of one whom you had honored with your friendship.”

For some moments both were silent; Bertha longed, yet feared, to ask for a confirmation of her newly-conceived hopes, and Montague seemed as though he were debating with himself as to what he should do. At last he turned, and seeing Bertha still standing, he said very gently:

“You must be fatigued, Miss Von Wiegel—had you not better sit down?”

“Pray excuse me, Major Montague,” said Bertha, scarce heeding the words, “am I to understand that you are innocent of—of——”

“Of all the crimes and misdemeanors mentioned by your informant.”

“Of all?” repeated Bertha, suddenly raising her eyes to his face.

“Yes, of all and every one of them—as truly as I hope for Heaven’s mercy!”

A smile of ideffable joy shone in Bertha’s eyes, but she cast them down to hide it, and merely said: “The clouds, then, *are* disappearing.”

She seated herself on the rustic bench, and looked up at Montague who stood before her regarding her with an expression which she could not understand.

“Miss Von Wiegel!” said he with some hesitation, “it is not very agreeable, to me at least, to speak of one’s self. There is one part of the expla-

nation which I feel bound to make that is utterly repugnant to my feelings—and yet it cannot be omitted in justice to myself.”

“Will you not sit down?” said Bertha, with the easy self-possession of her high breeding.

Montague smiled and bowed as he took the offered seat by her side. Both were to all outward appearance perfectly calm and composed, whatever might be passing within.

“I hope you never suspected me, Miss Von Wiegel,” resumed the major, “of being a coxcomb.”

Bertha laughed. “Well, I must confess I never did. Amongst all your sins—black as I was led to believe them—I never dreamed of *that*.”

“I am glad of it, as otherwise I should fear the more to lay open for your inspection the secret springs of the plot that has proved so injurious to me. Did you ever remark anything particular in Lady Susan’s manner towards me?—I mean, of course, anything incompatible with the relation known to exist, or rather, likely to exist, between us?”

Bertha cast down her eyes as she replied faintly in the affirmative.

“Ha! you saw it, then?—you saw that whilst betrothed to my brother,—which was, indeed, her father’s work and my father’s rather than hers or Alfred’s—her feelings towards me were anything but sisterly? But what *you* could possibly see was little compared to what actually took place—no art, no

allurement was left untried—and you know how captivating her ladyship was in those days.”

Bertha’s heart beat fast, and she dared not trust her voice to speak. Montague went on: “Few men, I flatter myself, would have come unscathed from such a fiery ordeal——”

Bertha leaned forward suddenly and looked him in the face.

“And did you?” she asked with an intensity that made her auditor’s heart thrill.

“I did! I can truly say that I regarded Lady Susan with no other feelings than those of aversion—fascinating as I own she was—arising in the first place from a sense of the injury done my absent brother by her advances to me; but there came a time,” he added after a pause, “when a more potent shield was given me, and a tower of strength rose up in my own heart against the persevering attacks of this Circe.”

Bertha turned her beautiful eyes full on his face with a look of earnest solicitude. She was thinking of religion—the light of faith—and she asked in all sincerity: “What was that?”

Montague fixed his eyes on her with a look of reproach that made her cheek turn pale, then red. His voice sank almost to a whisper as he said: “Lady Susan knew it, though you did not.”

“Lady Susan?—how do you mean?”

“Pause a moment and reflect,” said Montague, in the same low, earnest tone. “You say you thought

it strange that she should make such a revelation to you in particular. Ask yourself what possible motive she could have had in blackening *me to you*. Love is sharp-sighted—at least so they say—and Lady Susan saw because she loved, that which escaped your observation. Let that pass, however !” he added quickly. “I think you must now understand all that followed—her ladyship’s unaccountable marriage included.”

“I can—I do,” said Bertha with honest warmth ; “I see it all now, and you cannot think, Major Montague, how pleased I am to find that you are still—Edgar Montague !” she added with a look of arch intelligence, and in a voice from which all her recent coldness and constraint had vanished.

Montague bowed with mock courtesy. “It is something to have my identity acknowledged—but you seem to forget Edith Montague !——”

“Ah true ! and who *is* Edith Montague ?—or is there such a person ?”

“There is—and she is—my brother’s daughter !”

“What ! Lord Dunmore ?”

“Even so, I have no other. You never heard, then, that poor Alfred was married when very young—married privately, though—to the daughter of his travelling tutor, Isabella Lalor, a lovely and amiable girl she was, too—and that death severed the tie so imprudently formed—on Alfred’s part, at least—before my father came to hear of it.”

"Why no, I never heard of it!—that was a sad story!"

"Yes, sad indeed it was!" said Montague with deep feeling; "the poor girl died almost immediately after Edith's birth, and I believe my brother has never quite got over the shock, for he loved her very tenderly. Poor Alfred!" he raised his hand to his eyes, "and poor Edith! a hard lot was hers, assuredly, to lose her mother before she could know or feel a mother's care."

"And your father?"

"Oh! my father was very indignant, and vowed he would never forgive Alfred, but that was only for a time. If the young wife had lived, or even left a son who might possibly have inherited the title, his anger would have endured as long as his life, but Isabella being gone, and her child not likely to come between me and the family honors, he was easily pacified. In a year or two he had the child brought to Dunmore, a favor which Alfred did not dare to ask, but I did—and she was, I believe, the greatest solace of his last two years of life—she was very engaging, and my dear father, with all his faults, had a warm and loving heart."

Bertha thought of her mother and the relations which had once existed between her and the late Lord Dunmore, and she sighed for the dark stains that had spoiled so noble a character.

"The rest is easily told," resumed the major—"when my father died Alfred wished very naturally

to have the child near him, and at his request I took her myself to Madrid, where we placed her at school in a convent not far from the residence of the English Ambassador. Are you now satisfied, Miss Von Wiegel! that my character was blackened to you for an evil purpose?"

"I am—fully satisfied—may God forgive *her* who so maligned you, and so cruelly shook *my* faith in man! But now that I have heard all, it is time to think of my mother and your friend. Do let us join them, or we shall have them coming in search of us!"

She rose as she spoke—Montague rose, too, and they stood for a moment silent, looking out on the lovely scene.

"If I am again *Edgar Montague*," said the major in his most persuasive tones, "may I not hope that you are again the Bertha Von Wiegel of former days? Shall we not forget the troubled years that have come between, and take up the chain of life from the blissful hours of our earlier acquaintance, before the dark shadow crossed our path? Bertha!" he added in a tone of such deep feeling that it reached her inmost heart, "Bertha! you know not how I have loved you even when the ocean lay between us! From the first hour of our acquaintance I felt drawn to you by an irresistible impulse,—it seemed to me that our souls were assimilated to each other, and my highest and holiest aspirations were associated with you. Forgive me if I speak too

boldly, but there was a time, Bertha, when I dared to think that we were formed for each other, and that you were destined by Providence to lead me to the temple of truth—but that dream of hope vanished all too soon—I saw that you had learned to doubt me, and could not help feeling that Lady Susan was in some way the cause—but, believe me, I had no idea of the depth to which I had fallen in your estimation. Even as it was, I was so hurt by your evident distrust of me and the corresponding change in your manner, that I could not bring myself to seek an explanation. But oh! the dreariness of those long, long years during which I saw you not, nor heard your voice! It was partly to combat the increasing melancholy that was preying on my heart that I purchased a commission, hoping that the bustle of military life, and its strict routine of duty, might break the spell that bound me, and banish the cold, statue-like image from my heart——”

“Statue-like,” repeated Bertha, without raising her eyes; “you are complimentary, are you not?”

“I speak the truth:—there was no love, no life in the image that was shrined in my heart—it was cold as marble, yet there it stood—yes! even when the revel was loudest, and laugh and song were gayest round the mess-table—when smiles were brightest in the lighted hall—and when the sound of prancing steeds and martial music made the life-pulse quicken—still that pale, cold, loveless image reigned supreme. Wherever I went you were there—I heard your

voice in the whispering breeze and the murmuring water—I saw you in all that was fair and lovely, and I pined for the love of the one heart that I knew could beat responsive to my own. I moved through the dull routine of life as one in a dream—little heeding, perhaps little heeded—and no living soul knew aught of what was passing within me except Gerald Bellew—my ever-faithful friend. At length a burning desire took possession of me to see you once more and learn from your own lips what cloud it was that had obscured the heaven of our friendship. You know how we gained admission here, and I need hardly tell you that although I found you still strange and cold as before, I could not tear myself away, nor yet summon courage to seek an explanation, seeing that the result might be a final separation and efface the last vestige of hope.”

Bertha could not trust her voice for some moments, but as soon as she could venture to speak she said in a low subdued voice: “And how came Lady Susan here now?”

“That I know not—I solemnly assure you I have neither seen nor spoken to her yet, although that drivelling dotard, her husband, called upon us at our hotel the very morning after their arrival, and wished us to call on Lady Susan. But now, Bertha! time presses—one word more and I have done. *Are we friends again?*” And he took her two hands in his.

“Yes, Edgar! we are friends!”

His dark eyes flashed their light into her soul as he whispered: "And nothing more? Say, Bertha! are we only friends? Is there nothing due from you to me after years of unrequited love, and years, too, of unjust suspicion?"

Bertha looked up into his face with a bright smile. "For the suspicion I owe you an apology, for the love—nothing."

"And why, dearest?"

"Because"—and she drew her hands away, and receded towards the door—"because, Edgar Montague! the marble image of which you spoke had a throbbing heart when you thought it coldest—and its every throb was yours!"

She vanished through the doorway, but on the threshold met Gerald Bellew, who laughingly saluted her with—

"When should lovers breathe their vows,
When should ladies hear them,
When the moon is on the boughs,
And none else is near them."

"Whither so fast, fair lady?" She darted past him, and threw herself into her mother's arms in the now lighted drawing-room, murmuring: "Oh, mother! I am so happy!"



CHAPTER XXI.

THE GALLAGHERS UNDER A CLOUD.

THERE was a scene in the Gallagher mansion on the day following the nocturnal arrival of the Saratoga party. Mrs. Gallagher was home betimes in the morning, with Fanny and her two youngest daughters, and her voice was the first sound that reached her husband's ears when he started from a troubled dream a little before his usual hour of rising. She was evidently exercising her vocal organs on Ally Brady and her assistant, partly, as Tom supposed, in order to make up for lost time, and partly to "revenge her spite" on all the occupants of 66. It was something that Tom could not understand, and probably never *did* understand, why his angry spouse did not charge directly on the centre that morning instead of wasting her powerful energies on the wings of the domestic army. Now, as authors have a decided advantage over the actors they place on the stage, as regards secret springs and motives, we may tell the reader in confidence that good Mrs. Gallagher was, for once in her life, a little afraid to face Tom, and was, therefore, by no means anxious to precipitate the moment of their meeting. So she employed herself, pending the moment of his appearance, in a general survey

of the premises, accompanied by a running comment on what came under her observation, which comment was not very complimentary to Ally Brady's administration *pro tem*, and being delivered in a sharp falsetto voice, reached Tom's ears before mentioned,

"When half awaking from fearful slumbers,"

but, alas! Tom Gallagher hearing it did *not*

"—— Think the full choir of heaven near."

He arose, however, and descended as soon as might be, to the nether region of his domicile, following the direction of his wife's shrill voice, as herdsmen in forest wilds are guided to their missing sheep or cattle by the sound of their respective bells.

The greeting between the husband and wife was neither kind nor cordial; and Tom telling Ally to hurry in the breakfast, went into the front basement where he found his three daughters.

Before many words had passed—for even Fanny was a little abashed in her father's presence that memorable morning—Mrs. Gallagher bustled in in advance of the breakfast.

"Tom!" said she, as she took her wonted place at the table and began to arrange the cups and saucers on the tray, "Tom! we must see and get them girls home to-day. The poor things feel dreadful bad on account of what happened last night. I wonder at you, Tom! to act so and the two strangers to the fore!"

"Strangers!" said Tom with more acerbity than

might be expected from that placid good nature that usually distinguished him, "strangers! and is it to *strangers* you've married your two daughters, Ellen?"

"Oh nonsense! Tom, that's nothing—they'll not be long strangers, you know! I'm sure you'll be delighted with them when you come to know them—they're such nice, genteel young men—I tell you what, Tom!" she added confidentially, "if you knew but all it's a fine chance for Mag and Ellie, and I can tell you half the young ladies at Saratoga were crazy after them. Weren't they, Fanny?"

Miss Fanny's corroboration of the evidence was not so hearty or yet so prompt as her mother expected, and that injured parent admonished her by a menacing gesture that she had "a crow to pluck with her" the first opportunity.

"Nice, genteel young men!" repeated Tom, "and what do *I* care about their genteelness? isn't every loafer about the hotels a 'nice genteel young man?' Brown and Green were *very* nice, and mighty genteel young men, entirely! but it wasn't for such 'genteel young men' that I educated my daughters, and scraped money together to leave them independent. Don't talk to *me* about them—I wash my hands of the whole business, and I tell you once for all, Ellen! that the girls must make the best of it now with their *nice genteel* husbands! My threshold they'll never cross, or a night they'll never sleep under my roof—unless I find out that the fellows

are really what they say they are—and that's what I don't expect."

"Why, Lord bless me, Tom!" cried Mrs. Gallagher bristling up, "you don't mean to say that you'll deny your own daughters?"

"If they had respected me as their father I would not, Ellen!—God forbid! but they didn't do that—and now I tell you again, *as they brewed, so they must bake*. Not a word more now! Let them stick to Frost and Winter—I'm done with them!"

Tom had by this time swallowed a cup of coffee, and he left the table without saying another word, leaving his wife in a state of consternation and disappointment that were hard to describe.

Without loss of time, the anxious mother repaired to the hotel where the two brides awaited the summons to go home, or perhaps, Pa himself to escort them. Alas! alas! for human expectations. The long morning past away, and Pa appeared not, nor yet any one from him. They had almost made up their minds to venture home, when their mother arrived with the rather unpleasant news that the paternal doors were closed against them, and the paternal roof was not then, at least, to cover their heads. Messrs. Winter and Frost looked very indignant, and threatened to take their departure (with their wives, of course) *instantly* for "the land of cotton." They had a great mind to do it, they said—but they didn't, owing, doubtless, to the urgent solicitation of their wives, and the repeated

assurance of their mother-in-law that Tom would soon get over it—*she* knew his way—the first of him was always the worst—and after a week or two he'd come round again and be as good as pie.

However “the gay bridegrooms” might feel, or what their opinions were they kept between themselves, blandly informing Mrs. Gallagher that it was “all right.” Meanwhile Eliza and her husband called on the young couples, and were so taken with their new brothers-in-law that they invited them all to stay at their house until such time as Pa had cooled down and come to his senses again. The Fогartys and Hacketts were invited, with a few other friends, to meet Mr. and Mrs. Winter and Mr. and Mrs. Frost. By a strange coincidence the elders of the respective families absented themselves from “the party,” but the young people were delighted with the ease and affability and what-not of the gentlemen from Dixie, who then and there announced their intention of taking Mag and Ellie off on a tour within the week, indicating, at the same time, their intention of shaking the Manhattan dust off their feet when they left New York with their charming brides.

Whether this alarming threat, duly reported to him, *ad addenda*, had roused Tom Gallagher's paternal affection from its nap or what, I am not prepared to say, but he returned home from his business next forenoon at an hour when no one dreamed of seeing him. To the repeated inquiries of his wife and

daughters as to what brought him home, he scarcely vouchsafed an answer, but it was plain something unusual had happened, and Tom's unwonted silence left his female relatives all in the dark. At last Tom spoke, and his words were words of hope and joy to the troubled mind of his anxious helpmate.

"Go for the girls!" said Tom in a magisterial tone, addressing his wife.

"The girls! dear me, Tom! are you in earnest?"

"I am—go and bring them home!"

"And—and their husbands?"

"To be sure—I don't want to part husband and wife. Let Frost and Winter come—as they will!" he added in an under tone.

Each of the girls volunteered to go, but no! their mother could not let any one else go on so delightful an errand, so off she went. Many little arts were employed by the girls, but unsuccessfully, to coax their father to tell them the secret of this sudden change—for they knew there *was* a secret—so they told him—but Tom was not to be coaxed on that occasion, and wrapped himself up in a mantle of reserve, which was proof against all manner of assailment. By and by a gentle ring came to the door—a very gentle ring, and Tom himself hastened to answer the summons. The girls ran to get a peep through the half-open door of the parlor, but la! it was only Atty Garrell, and they heard their father say in a low voice, as he ushered him in: "You're just in time, Atty! I expect them every minute, and

I wouldn't for all the time you'll lose have you miss it."

"Miss what?" said the young ladies one to another, but alas! there was none to answer the question.

A little while and another ring came—a loud, imperative ring, which could only be given by the hand of Mrs. Gallagher, and Mrs. Gallagher surely it was, and Ellie and Mag and Jerome Winter and Ruben Frost, all of whom were duly ushered, or ushered themselves, into the parlor. Mag and Ellie were seized with an extraordinary fit of filial affection at the sight of their dear Pa, whom they had not seen for a whole age, and their caresses were quite overpowering. But somehow Pa did not seem at all moved by this unusual display, and his cool, dry, matter-of-fact salutation was not very encouraging to the young ladies whose hearts were so brimful of love and joy, and hope and expectation, and all manner of pleasant emotions.

As for Messrs. Winter and Frost, Tom contented himself with a somewhat gruff nod to each, with the further addition of a curt "How d'ye do, sir?" Whereunto the much-amazed Southerners responded with a rather hesitating assurance that they were respectively "Quite well."

"God keep you so, gentlemen!" was Tom's very amicable reply, "I'm thinking you'll need both health and strength to keep up these girls in any sort of a decent way!"

"Oh! as for that, Mr. Gallagher!" said Winter in a very confident tone, "I guess there a'nt much to apprehend."

"Humph!" grunted Tom, half aloud, "I didn't know people *guessed* down South!"

Hearing this Fanny coughed affectedly, and Atty Garrell drew his chair a little out from his usual station behind one of the doors. Mr. Frost looked at Mr. Winter with a slight expression of dissatisfaction on his face—which, by the way, was decidedly *a la corsair* in its general character—but whether as regarded the nature of their reception or his choice of words that gentleman had no means of ascertaining.

Mrs. Gallagher was not quite satisfied with the aspect of affairs, and still less the two brides, but they all had to put the best face they could on the matter, and feign a contentment which they did not feel.

And Tom sat looking at them all through his half-shut eyes, occasionally glancing at his friend, Atty, behind the door opposite him, with an expression hard to define, but unmistakeably troubled.

At length Mrs Gallagher, tired of this strange uncertainty, and anxious to get to the bottom of the affair at once, said to Mag and Ellie: "Well, girls, I guess you may as well go up stairs and take off your things, now that you're come back for good." She looked at Tom, and Tom looked at her, and then Tom delivered himself as follows:

"Well! I don't know they've come *for good*, Ellen, in regard to the room——"

"The room! how is that? I'm sure there's room enough!"

"There is *now*, Ellen! but it won't be long so. We must cut our coat, you know, according to the cloth, and the cloth will be stinted enough, I can tell you."

"Dear me! how you talk!" said Mag.

"Why, he's enough to frighten one, I declare!" affectedly sighed Ellie, whilst Fanny opened her eyes very wide and fixed them on her father.

"Tom Gallagher!" said the mother of the family, "what *do* you mean?—out with it at once whatever it is—I'll engage it's some of your foolish tricks you're playing!"

"It's a trick I wouldn't like to play often, then," said Tom very much in earnest. "Poor woman! like many a one else in the world you don't know what you're talking about. Do you know the news I got this morning?"

Of course no one *did* know, but all were alarmingly anxious to know.

"The Speculators' Bank has failed!" said Tom in a voice which he tried hard to keep steady, but failed to do so, and the tears that filled his eyes showed the depth and sincerity of his emotion.

"Good Lord, Tom! you're not in earnest?" cried his wife, pale as a ghost, while the daughters gave

vent to their consternation in sundry exclamations of terror and alarm.

"I guess I *am* in earnest!" said Tom dolorously; "I can tell you, Ellen, I never was in less humor of jesting."

"But, Tom dear! are you sure it's true?"

"Sure enough, God help me!" and Tom drew from his pocket the official notification, and handed it to Atty Garrell to read, for the sight of it renewed his agitation so that he could hardly command his voice. The letter being read, a chorus of lamentation broke forth from the mother and daughters, the former bemoaning the loss of their hard, honest earning, the fruit of so many years of steady industry, the latter the probable loss of position and stylish living. Ellie and Mag addressed themselves particularly to their respective consorts, but those gentlemen appeared to take the matter very coolly,—so coolly, indeed, that it went far to shake Tom's suspicions as to the reality of their pretensions. Quite philosophical they both were, and made as little to do about the total loss of their father-in-law's money as though the event in no way affected *their* prospects. Still they courteously offered their condolence on that very disagreeable occasion, and Mr. Frost went on to say with that "laughing devil in his sneer," that he should certainly lose no time in preparing Lemonvale, S. C., for the family reception until such time as the affair had blown over in New York.

"Oh you dear Frost!" said his wife affectionately patting him on the cheek or rather on the whiskers, "how *very* kind you are!—my, I'm so much obliged to you!"

Tom, too, expressed his obligations, adding, however, somewhat drily, that South Carolina was a long way off—and he'd sooner keep the family at home, whatever way they managed. "Of course I have my business still," said Tom, "and this house. Thank God Mr. O'Blarney hadn't *them* in his clutches, anyhow! Oh! the villain! the villain!" said poor Tom, rising and pacing the floor with hasty strides, "*him* of all men—him of all men to rob people that trusted their share in his hands! Didn't he pass for all as one as a Saint, an out-and-out voteen, and to hear him talk, you'd think he had every other one's interest at heart more than his own! The black hypocrite—the curse of——no! no! I'll not curse him, bad as he is—the curse will fall on him heavy enough without me adding a stone to the heap!—come away, Atty! we'll have to work harder now!" beckoning to his faithful friend and confidant whose face was very considerably longer and lanker than usual, and the tears of sympathy standing in his dull eyes; for Atty was almost as grieved as Tom by this sudden reverse of fortune—and his guileless heart was troubled within him at the strange sight of his patron's sorrow, so very unexpected, too, after the apparent stoicism which he had previously manifested. Poor Atty knew lit-

tle of the mysterious workings of that great mystery, the human heart!

"But *my* Lord! what are we going to do?" cried Mrs. Gallagher, falling into a chair in a state of consternation.

"In the first place," said Tom, "we must let or sell this house." (A groan from Mrs. Gallagher and each of the young ladies.) "In the next place, we must get rid of the coach, coachman and horses!" (Another groan from the "womankind.") "Also, the box at the Opera." ("Mercy on us! Pa!") "And lastly, we must take a small house in Yorkville, or somewhere out of town where we can live cheaper than we do here."

This was the climax of misfortune, and the ladies' voices suddenly failed them; pale and wan, and entirely hopeless in their misery, they looked into each other's eyes and seemed at a loss whether to cry or not to cry. Meanwhile the two polar gentlemen were also exchanging looks, but of a very different signification. Presently they took up their hats and canes, and Mr. Winter spoke on behalf of self and friend.

"Before you go, Mr. Gallagher, it may be well to have an understanding with regard to the present and future prospects of your two daughters whom we have had the honor of espousing."

All eyes were instantly turned on the speaker. Mag and Ellie changed color and cast a furtive glance at each other.

"I am now," resumed Mr. Winter, "and have always been, a lover of truth—truth, therefore, compels me to say that my affairs are at present in such a condition that I could not support my wife in a style corresponding with my wishes—or her own deserts. With a little pecuniary assistance I might have extricated myself from my financial embarrassments, and redeemed Cucumberville, my paternal mansion. As matters stand now there is no hope of that—I may manage to make out for myself until such times as luck turns, but I could not, as a man of honor, commit my wife's existence to the precarious chances of—*the gaming table!* Good-bye! Ellie, my dear! if I leave you, it is in safer keeping than mine! We *may* meet again under more favorable auspices!"

He was gone before any one present could realize the full meaning of his words; Ellie fainted in her chair, and when Mag turned to address *her* liege lord, behold Frost had vanished, too, doubtless in the wake of Winter, for, being a much smaller man, he could more easily pass out unnoticed. Then did Mag throw herself in a chair and raise a piteous cry, clapping her hands by way of accompaniment, but alas! no one seemed to heed her, all being intent on restoring Ellie to consciousness. When I say all, I mean all who had attention to bestow on either, and that was Mrs. Gallagher and her two youngest daughters, for Tom stood looking on with a face of stony indifference, and Fanny was sobbing hysteri-

cally in a corner; not from sympathy for her unfortunate sisters, but the impending privation of "style," with all its concomitants, horses, carriage liveried servant, fine house, fine furniture, and, though last, certainly not least, the high prerogative of leading off in her own sphere of fashiondom. Poor, poor Fanny! how are the mighty fallen! And so, perhaps, thought Atty Garrell, for the tears came into his eyes at sight of Fanny's distress, and he actually summoned courage to creep over to where she sat, and articulate some words of consolation, after his own timid fashion. Miss Fanny, amazed at what she considered his unwarrantable presumption, turned on him a look of haughty contempt that all but annihilated Atty, and there is no knowing how he would have effected his escape had not his patron's voice, reminding him of the lapse of time, at once recalled him to himself, and given him an opportunity of transferring himself to some place beyond the range of Miss Fanny's withering glance. As Tom left the room with Atty he looked with something like pity at the two deserted wives.

"God help you, poor foolish girls!" said he, "that's what you got by your trip to Saratoga!—God forgive *you*, Ellen!" to his wife, "you're more to blame than they are for *this*—and sure *it's* the worst of all!—the other misfortune can be repaired—and if it doesn't, too, what about it?—but this—we'll never get over this!" He could say no more, for his grief was choking him, and he felt as if his heart

would burst, under the accumulated load of sorrow.

"But, my goodness, Tom!" called his wife after him, "sure they can't leave their wives that way—won't the law compel them to support them?"

"Support your granny!" was Tom's rather contemptuous but very comprehensive answer, as he let himself out of the hall-door followed by Atty.

When they were gone, the daughters gathered around their mother, all bemoaning their hard fate, but Mag and Ellie in the deepest tribulation.

"Why, then, Ma! what will we do at all?" cried Ellie, wringing her hands in a fresh outburst of sorrow. "What will become of Mag and me, above all?"

"Set up a young lady's boarding-school, can't you?" rather tauntingly asked Fanny.

At another time the taunt would have raised a storm about Fanny's ears, but alas! for poor Ellie and Mag, they were too sad and spiritless to take any notice of their sister's unkindness, and the change touched Fanny, albeit that her heart was none of the softest. It was observed that from that moment she never once twitted either of them with their misfortune.

"I'll tell you what it is, girls!" said Mrs. Gallagher compressing her lips very tightly, "there's a heavy load on us this day, and whether we will or no, we must bear it. There's nothing for it, then, but put our shoulders together, and bear it the best way we can. Do you understand me now?"

Yes, they all understood very well, but it was quite clear that the proposition was not very satisfactory. Fanny, in particular, was quite indignant.

"Why, ma! what *can* we do more than we *have* been doing? I'm sure we've worked hard enough all the time, and if you don't call that putting our shoulder to the wheel, I don't know what *is*!"

"Well! but that's not enough," said the mother very decidedly, "we must come down—I say *come down*!" looking at each of her wondering auditors in turn—"we must let the people see that we *can* come down, and a'nt ashamed to do it, and that's the way to keep up our independence, and keep others from making little of us. They'll not have the laugh against us when they see we can take things as they come, and cut our coat according to our cloth—as your father says."

"Why, ma! what would you have us do?" again asked Fanny, in right of her seniority.

"Just this, Fanny; what has to be done let it be done at once! You know in your hearts we have done wrong, and now we must try and do right. It's true enough for your father, these matches we made at Saratoga are worse than all the rest. We must help your poor father all we can, by giving up all unnecessary expense. First of all we'll move into a smaller house, and maybe we could sell or let this one, furniture and all. The next thing we must do is to dress plainer——"

This last proposition was even more distasteful

than the other ; even Mag and Ellie were roused by it from their lethargy of woe.

"La, ma ! how you do talk !—dress plainer, indeed !"

"My ! you might just as well say, let us lie right down under the people's feet, and invite them to walk over us !"

"Dress plainer, indeed ! well now, if that a'n't good !" disdainfully said Fanny.

"Good or bad, Fanny ! it must be done !" said her mother emphatically, "there an't any help for it. It's very like your father will need all the money he can raise to carry on the business, and when once we're depending on what he makes, without anything to fall back on, we needn't think to keep up style in any way ! So now, girls, I've told you what's to be done, and let there be no more talk about it. Maybe, it's all for the best, after all—at any rate, we must try and make it so ! Come, come, Mag ! and you, Ellie ! cheer up—there's no cure for spilt milk, you know ! and crying and fretting won't bring anything back that's gone ! Maybe you're well rid of Frost and Winter, and you don't know what luck may turn up to you !"

Mag and Ellie shook their heads—they did not see what luck *could* turn up for them, and in any case there was the disgrace and humiliation of being so entrapped first, and then deserted. This was the cruellest thought of all, and all their mother's characteristic energy could not infuse hope or con-

tentment into *their* minds—at least for the present.

One thing, however, was certain, viz.: that the daughters, married and single, however they might grumble and fret at the new line of policy marked out by their mother, could not help seeing that she was in the right, and they really respected her more at that moment than they had ever done before, in her days of unlimited power and equally unlimited ostentation.

No time was lost in making the necessary retrenchments, and only one month after the failure of the Speculators' Bank, the Gallaghers found themselves located in a two-story cottage not far from the line of the Third Avenue Railroad, furnished in corresponding style, and, in the opinion of some, in far better taste than ever the great mansion had been. I say not that the greater simplicity of the furniture was owing to any improvement of taste or the part of the ladies, but simply to the fact that Tom, having now turned over a new leaf, as he said had bought the furniture himself, and bought it, of course, to his own liking.

In the matter of dress, I regret to say, the new system of Economy was not so visible. Indeed, it was remarked by the scores of kind and curious individuals whose eyes were ever on the Gallaghers that the ladies went out in extra style since their change of residence, and were generally seen "moving under finery." The strangest thing of all was

that Atty Garrell himself began to dress up quite *a la mode*, and to hold his head some inches higher since the Gallaghers fell from their high estate. There was no accounting for *that*, anyhow—so the people said,—but then, you know, what the people says is not always true.



CHAPTER XXII.

A FEW moments sufficed to explain matters to Madam Von Wiegel, and Montague, with thoughtful delicacy, detained Bellew on the piazza. Madam Von Wiegel, having heard all that was necessary of what had passed, tenderly embraced her daughter, and whispered, "I knew all would come right at last," then went herself to invite the gentlemen to join them in the drawing-room.

Frankly extending her hand to Montague she said in a voice faltering with emotion: "For the first time, Edgar Montague! I bid you welcome!—Son of Harry Montague! welcome to my heart!" Major Montague took the offered hand and bowed over it, then raised it to his lips with filial respect and the grace that accompanied all his actions.

"Madam Von Wiegel," said he, "you know not how many emotions are throbbing in my heart as you thus address me. Not least amongst them is the awakened remembrance of a loved though perhaps erring father, for I am not ignorant, my dear madam! of the relations in which you once stood to each other, and I can bear willing testimony to the tender friendship, the profound respect with which my dear father regarded you to his last hour."

"Upon my honor, Montague," broke in Bellew,

"it's a singular coincidence to say the least of it, that *you* should do homage to the daughter's charms as your noble father did to the mother's! I'm delighted to hear, however, that 'the course of true love' is beginning 'to run smooth' in your case, contrary to the saying of the immortal *Williams* (as the French translator called the Bard of Avon), to wit, that said course *never* does run smooth."

"Were you not an interested party, Bellew?" returned Montague laughingly, "I should thank you very sincerely—you may not be aware, Madam Von Wiegel! that—shall I go on, Gerald?"

"A pretty question truly, when you have said enough already to excite the curiosity of any daughter of Eve!"

"Well! then, madam," proceeded Montague, "be it known to you that Captain Gerald Bellew here present holds the promise of your fair niece, Miss Eveleen O'Donovan, to take him for better, for worse,—I quote his own words—on condition that——"

"There now!" said Gerald laughing merrily, "I knew you couldn't get through it—allow me to finish! The condition alluded to, my dear madam, by my honorable and gallant friend, was that a proper understanding should first be effected between—the Doge of Venice, there, as Robert Murray might say, and—the Adriatic yonder!"* point-

* I presume our gay captain was referring just then to the symbolical ceremony which annually took place in Venice

ing over his shoulder. "It was Miss Eveleen's pleasure to maintain all through that—ahem! that *there was no love lost between the two*—and she positively declared that a ring should never be put on her finger, by me at least, until Edgar and Bertha were ready to start with us on the high road to happiness."

"And how do you know we are so now?"

"I don't *know* it, but I *guess* it,—albeit not much given to guessing."

"My dear Captain Bellew!" said Madam Von Wiegel, "you give me very great pleasure, indeed! I am, then, to consider you as my nephew elect?" And she held out her hand which Bellew warmly shook.

"Undoubtedly, madam! always providing that Edgar Montague be your son-in-law elect."

Hearing this, Montague changed color, and was evidently discomposed, but he forced a smile and said, as they followed Madam Von Wiegel into the drawing-room, "Really, Gerald! your good-nature outstrips your discretion. I must beg you to remember that I am principal in this matter!"

"There you are, my Lord High Constable! or what shall I call him, Miss Von Wiegel?" addressing that young lady who was just re-entering the drawing-room after giving some brief orders in the kitchen.

during her reign of prosperity, viz., the dropping of a ring by the Doge into the Adriatic Sea—allegorically considered the Bride of Venice.

"Call who?"

"Why, Edgar Montague, to be sure!"

"For myself I cannot say," Bertha replied with that spiritual archness which at times gave piquancy to her manner; "I have heard him mentioned by divers names all suggestive of high mightiness."

"Yes, yes," said Montague with his calm smile, "I know there are some hereabouts who hold me in extraordinary *high* estimation—Lieutenant Murray, to wit!"

"But, Bertha, my child! I have news for you," said her mother; "would you believe it? I have just learned that Captain Bellew is the accepted candidate for our dear Eveleen's hand?"

"Remember the condition, madam!" put in Bellew with malice *prepense*.

"I am more pleased than surprised by that news, mother," said Bertha with a beaming smile; "I have long suspected as much."

"Perhaps you suspected more," said Bellew with sly emphasis, "the trifling condition, namely, on which Eveleen gave her consent to assume the name and arms of Bellew?"

"Condition!" repeated Bertha in surprise, "what condition?" She looked at Montague, perhaps unconsciously.

"Shall I tell her, Madam Von Wiegel?" asked Montague, "you see this loquacious friend of mine has got that word '*condition*' on his tongue, and must, forsooth! thrust it into everything! It is

easily seen that my poor Gerald is a true Celt, and cannot, if he would, keep a secret !”

“Nay, that is hardly fair, major ! seeing that I have kept yours so long and faithfully !”

Availing himself of the old lady’s kindly nod of assent, Montague drew Bertha’s arm within his, and they walked out again on the piazza. A change had come over the fair scene since they saw it last, short as the time had been. Clouds were drifting at intervals over the blue sky, and the winds were arising as if from sleep, shaking the branches with no gentle motion, and scattering their leaves, “the summer’s pride,” in all directions.

“Were we inclined to be superstitious,” said Montague, raising his eyes to the dense cloud which just then obscured the queen of night, “we might augur ill from so sudden a change in the face of nature at this critical juncture of our affairs ! But I know you are as little influenced by such idle fears as I am myself.”

“But only think, Edgar ! if this rough weather should continue—at this particular time”—her voice failed her and she stopped.

“I know what you mean, Bertha ! and my heart thanks you for your tender foresight—but *I* have no fears—will not He who has care over the birds of the air protect *my* life and our dear Gerald’s, even for the sake of those who deign to feel interested in our welfare ?”

“Why, Edgar ! you speak as a Christian !”

Montague smiled and went on: "I must not detain you long here, Bertha! for the storm seems rather increasing——"

"It is not cold, though, and I love to look abroad on a stormy landscape, when the winds are at play, and the clouds sweep over the vault of heaven."

"Even so it is with me, Bertha!—it seems as though the passionate wailing of the winds and the wild commotion of the elements stir up the latent energies of our being, and raise us higher in the scale of creation. At such times we are brought, as it were, face to face with the Great Spirit of the Universe whose voice thunders in the storm. But," he added in a softened tone, "we have little time to spare now for such sweet communings—a time will come, I fondly hope, when our lives shall flow on together towards the ocean of eternity—now I meant but to tell you of the 'condition' to which Gerald had reference." He told her, then added in a tremulous voice: "What think you, now, Bertha! of Gerald's chance—and *mine*?"

"Before I answer that question," said Bertha, "*you* must answer another, on which, after all, our fate depends. You may probably remember what I once told you, that if I ever had a husband he must be a Catholic. In the days of our sweetest intercourse—forgive me, Edgar! if I was wrong—I fancied that your mind and all your habits of thought were essentially Catholic—else had I never——"

"Never *loved* me!" said Montague very, very softly; "why should you hesitate to say it *now*?"

"Well!—be it so—else had I never loved you. Say, Edgar! did my heart deceive me?—was I mistaken?"

She suddenly turned towards him, and looked up into his face with an intensity that was almost painful to behold. Edgar Montague smiled—oh! how beautiful his smile was then—and he laid his hand on Bertha's pale brow, and tenderly smoothed down the dark tresses by which it was shaded, and he said in his calm, full voice: "Bertha! you were *not* mistaken! I have had the happiness of being a Catholic for the last two years. I was received into the Church by a Spanish priest in Madrid. Nay, I am even a child of Mary!" And he drew from his bosom the brown scapular of the Order of Mount Carmel. "Once in the ruined chapel of St. Bernard, at Mellifont, when you spoke to me of the great Cistercian's love for Mary, I told you that if I had Bernard's faith, I, too, would be a servant of that glorious queen."

"Now Heaven be praised!" cried Bertha with a burst of joyful emotion; "now—now, indeed, shall we be united—for eternity!"

"But you forget, Bertha! that *time* is before eternity. Shall we not be united here first, that together we may win our way to the mansions of eternal bliss? Tell me, dear one! what have I to hope?"

"Hope all things!" said Bertha with a blush and a smile. "See! the clouds are dispersing, and the winds subsiding—even so, Edgar! shall the storms of life pass away for us—you will come back—perhaps soon—from that Indian land—and then—this hand shall be yours as this heart is now!"

Montague sighed, smiled sadly as he drew Bertha's arm within his: "The chances of war are a dim uncertain medium through which to look for happiness. Your promise is much, Bertha, *but it is not enough!* We must take your mother into our councils."

"I was going in search of you," said Madam Von Wiegel, meeting them at the door.

"And I was beginning to fear," laughed Gerald Bellew, "that Master Boreas, blustering railer as he is, had taken you both bodily on his wings to the polar regions. How goes our suit, Edgar?"

"Reasonably well—but our respective claims of happiness are still far distant. That is precisely what I wished to speak of now to Madam Von Wiegel." Hearing this Bertha retired to a window at the farther end of the room. There she stood for some moments apparently intent on the yet changeful aspect of the heavens, but in reality trying to still the wild tumult of her emotions, and preserve at least a degree of outward composure. All at once she heard Bellew's clear, ringing laugh, and his joyous "Hurrah! the day is ours!" and the next moment Montague's voice whispered at her side, as he took

her hand to lead her to her mother : " Bertha ! your mother consents——"

" Consents to what ?" she asked like one in a dream.

" To our union—think of that, Bertha !—why, how is this ?—you are pale—you tremble !"

" To our union, Edgar ! when ! how ?" she gasped for breath.

" Be calm, dearest ! or I shall begin to fear that you do not love me, after all—that you dread taking the irrevocable vow which will make you mine !"

" Not love you !" she repeated with a strange smile, " oh no, Edgar Montague ! you could not fear *that* !—but the thought of being *your* wife !—mother !" she had now reached the *fauteuil* where her mother sat, " mother ! what has Edgar been asking of you !"

" My consent to a certain life-contract between you two—that is all !" said the old lady repressing a sigh at the same time.

" With the proximate result of another between your humble servant, and—you know who !" said Bellew with overflowing gaiety, quoting Bertha's own words on a former occasion.

" And I have ventured to ask for a further extension of the favor," said Montague ; " my dear madam, will *you* tell Bertha how far I have presumed on your maternal kindness to me ?"

" Major Montague has been trying to persuade me, Bertha !" said the old lady in a voice that trem-

bled in spite of her efforts to keep it firm, "that—that it is expedient to have the marriage solemnized before he leaves here. He says he cannot bear to leave you again without the security of the marriage-tie. He says, as your husband, he can brave every danger, and steer through every tempest, guided by the star of hope."

"Do you, then, fear to trust my love, Edgar?" said Bertha, regarding him with a mournful smile.

"Assuredly not, after what has passed—but I cannot divest myself of a fear that my evil genius might again interpose between me and happiness."

"Do you mean that I should go with you to India?" she added in a low troubled voice.

"Heaven forbid!" cried Montague turning pale, "the very love that fills my heart would prevent me from carrying selfishness so far as to take you from your mother's side to share my dangers and privations on the burning plains of Asia! Nay, dearest! I asked not that, but only that you should become my wife before I leave New York, and remain with your mother until I return—if return I ever do!"

Bertha shuddered, "Talk not so, I beseech you, Edgar! I will have no *ifs* about it. Still," she added, starting from the ottoman whereon she had thrown herself beside her mother, and looking in his face with passionate eagerness, "still—an *if* cannot kill you, and if it were Heaven's will that you should fall—that I should never look upon your face again—I would be yours even in death—it were something

to bear your name,—Edgar ! I consent—if my dear mother is willing.”

“Heaven bless you, my dearest child !” said Madam Von Wiegel in a choking voice ; “I desire only your happiness, and I know—I feel that this union will secure it. It may be as well—better on some accounts—that the marriage should take place before Major Montague’s departure for India, and as we have had some thoughts of selling this place to a near relation of my husband’s—a Von Wiegel, too—and going home to Castle Mahon, we shall lose no time in carrying out that intention, so that you can join us the sooner on your return from India.”

“A thousand thanks, my dear madam !” said Montague shaking her hand warmly ; “that will, indeed, expedite our meeting !”

“And we shall all be together,” said Bertha looking archly at Bellew, “for the grand affair to come off, on *your* return, at Castle Mahon, when dear Uncle Gerald will give Eveleen away at the altar, and the hearts of the O’Donovan tenantry will be made glad by the festivities of a wedding—a novel event now-a-days at Castle Mahon, my mother’s being the last that took place there.”

“Heigho !” sighed Bellew with mock gravity but real feeling, “Heaven only knows when that will come to pass. However,” he added with assumed gaiety, “next to my own, I shall be best pleased to see Edgar’s. Let us see—it must be to-morrow, you know !”

"Supper on the table, ma-dam !" cried Jan at the door, and Bellew was on his feet in an instant to make his bow to Madam Von Wiegel, leaving Bertha thereby to Montague. As they descended the wide staircase, Bellew made a march for his own feet, humming in an audible voice, to Madam Von Wiegel's great amusement :

"Row, brothers, row, for the pride of the Highlands,
Honor'd and bless'd be the ever-green pine !
Soon may the rose-bud that graces yon islands,
Be wreath'd in a garland around him to twine !"

"I say, major ! couldn't we manage to slip a pine-tree anywhere into the Montague arms ?"

"I fear not," said Montague laughing, "the pine is not indigenous to our *field*. But why this heraldic conceit now, I pray you ?"

"Why, I was just thinking that the dark-browed chief of Clan-Alpine might possibly have been a remote progenitor, and, by-the-bye, Edgar ! that French name of yours analyzed does savor of the mountains — *Mont-ague* — steep mountain — seriously Edgar ! did you ever observe that ?"

"I cannot say I did—many thanks for your information."

They had now reached the table, and conversation was suspended till the business of the hour was happily commenced.

When the little party returned to the drawing-room the gentlemen would have taken their leave, but Bertha whispered a request that Montague

would play some one of her old favorites before he went. She handed him at the same time a small flute which he had left there some days before.

"What shall I play?" he asked, but without waiting for an answer he commenced "True Love can ne'er Forget." Bertha's eyes filled and her cheek flushed, remembering the last time she heard that touching strain.

When the music ceased Madam Von Wiegel exclaimed: "Bertha! that was the third air I heard in that pleasant dream, and which I could not remember. You know I told you of it next day—it *was* a heart-soothing strain."

"Something akin to the harmony of the spheres—was it not, mother?" said Bertha smiling through her tears, and looking archly at Montague. "Perhaps Edgar could enlighten you as to the unseen musician—but I forgot—he was up somewhere in the Hudson Highlands that memorable night—how was that, Edgar?" she asked, with a sudden change from gay to grave. "Were you, or were you not in our vicinity that night?"

Montague smiled. "Possibly I might have been—in a fit of somnambulism."

"But I thought you said when we first saw you here that you had been for the two weeks previous rambling through the Highlands?"

"Yes, but he did *not* tell you," said Bellew, beginning to button up, "that we had arrived in town back again that very afternoon. There is strong

presumptive evidence against you, Edgar!" he gaily added nodding at his friend, "you had better let the *case* go by default, and us by rail."

"If you were at Castle Mahon to-night you would be in no such hurry, my good fellow!—Lead on, however, I follow—waiving my military precedence!"

"Nay, one song before you go!—it may be the last you will sing for us—here at least!" whispered Bertha, her hand on his arm.

There was no resisting, no thought of resisting that pleading voice, and making a sign to Bellew to wait a few moments, Edgar took his seat at the piano, and, running his finger over the keys with a freedom and ease that showed him master of the instrument, he paused a moment, then began in a voice so rich, full and harmonious, and, at the same time, so expressive of deep feeling, that it sank into every heart, Mrs. Hemans' beautiful Parting Song, set to a soft Italian air:

"When will you think of me, my friends!

When will you think of me?

When the last red light, the farewell of day,
From the rock and the river is passing away,
When the air with a deepening hush is fraught,
And the heart grows burden'd with tender thought,
Then let it be!

"When will you think of me, kind friends!

When will you think of me?

When the rose of the rich midsummer-time
Is fill'd with the hues of its glorious prime,
When ye gather its bloom, as in bright hours fled,

From the walks where my footsteps no more may tread,
Then let it be!

“When will ye think of me, sweet friends!
When will ye think of me!
When the sudden tears o’erflow your eye,
At the sound of some olden melody,
When ye hear the voice of a mountain stream,
When ye feel the charm of a poet’s dream,
Then let it be!”

“You will excuse me from singing the last stanza,” said Montague rising, “you know its purport, Bertha! and how far it is from being adapted to my peculiar circumstances.* Assuredly, it is *not* well for *me* ‘to be fled and gone.’ Good night!” And with one glance at Bertha’s drooping face, he followed Bellew from the room and the house, with an understanding that they were to return next morning for an early breakfast.

The arrangements for the marriage were all made within half an hour after breakfast, and with the aid of the parish priest, a dispensation was obtained, and the ceremony took place the same evening in the oratory of Rheinfeldt House, with no other wit-

* As our readers may not know it as well as Bertha, they may probably wish to see it. It is as follows:

“Thus let my mem’ry be with ye, friends!
Thus ever think of me!
Kindly and gently, but as of one,
For whom it is well to be fled and gone,
As of a bird from a cage unbound,
As of a wand’rer whose home is found,
Thus let it be!”

nesses than Mr. Murray and Alice, who was, of course, bridesmaid, Captain Bellew and Madam Von Wiegel, with Jan and Betty in the distance.

The news and the invitation had come on the Murrays that morning like a thunderbolt. It was, indeed, nothing more than they had expected, but now when expectation was becoming certainty, and poor Robert's chance of success was passing away forever their hearts were weighed down with a sadness which they tried in vain to combat by thinking and speaking of Bertha's happiness. Mr. Murray spoke his mind freely to Alice, and railed at Montague to his heart's content, while dressing for the great occasion; but Alice did not open *her* mind so freely to her father—at least, I fear she did not. There was a faint drooping of the eyelids and a touching tremor in the voice, at all times soft and low, that would have struck an acute observer; but such was not Mr. Murray, at least on that occasion, and well for him that it was so.

When Alice arrived at Rheinfeldt House early in the afternoon, her greeting to Bertha was as kind and sisterly as usual, and a smile lit up her sweet features as she whispered: "I knew you were made for each other—but it does seem so strange!"

"You will not think so, dear Alice! when I tell you all—for now—I mean when *they* are gone"—Bertha's voice faltered—"you shall know all!"

When the hour appointed came, and the priest was at the altar, and Mr. Murray in waiting to give

away the bride, and Madam Von Wiegel with a face half smiles half tears, seated in her large chair drawn up near the altar steps at one side, and Jan and Betty, looking very happy, seated on a bench side by side in the background of the picture, then Edgar Montague and Bertha Von Wiegel took their places in front of the little altar, with its lights and flowers surrounding the Cross and the Madonna, and Gerald Bellew beside his friend, and Alice Murray close to Bertha, it was a sight that would have rejoiced a painter's eye.

"Yet 'tis not in the blushing bride, all beauteous as she seems,
Like angel-forms thro' air that glide to bless a martyr's
dreams,—

Not in the bridegroom's stately mien, dark eye and daring
brow,

The sight that chains mine eye is seen, and fills my bosom
now.

Seest thou that pale yet lovely maid, companion of the
bride,

In robes of virgin-white array'd, and kneeling at her side?
Mark her dim eye and bloodless cheek—ah! wherefore dost
thou start?

Too well thou know'st that both bespeak the struggling of
the heart!

In silence and in solitude a fatal flame was nurst,
And now that flame, still unsubdued, thus must she brave
the worst!"

When the ceremony was ended, and the nuptial blessing pronounced, and Edgar Montague clasped his wife in a first embrace, Alice heard his impassioned whisper—"Mine—for ever mine!" and she

caught the glance that spoke, more than the words, the treasured love of years—the gushing, trembling, exulting joy that the heart feels when its prize is won, and its hour of triumph come at last. Then as Edgar led Bertha to her mother, and smilingly said, “*Mrs. Montague!*” and both knelt to receive the maternal blessing, Alice Murray shrank trembling back, whispering low to her own heart, “Who could think so much love was hidden beneath that cold, proud, passionless exterior! oh Bertha, happy, indeed, is your lot!—and his!—may the future fulfil the bright promise of the present, and your lives be one long, long dream of joy!” “I’m glad poor Robert is not here!” was her next thought, as her anxious look turned on her father’s unusually clouded brow. When the priest and all present, not excepting Jan and Betty, had offered their congratulations to the bride and groom, the company returned to the drawing-room, and Bertha and Alice retired together. During the half hour which they spent in friendly commune, Bertha saw, all unknown to Alice, far deeper into the poor girl’s heart than was good for her own peace, for she loved Alice as a younger sister, and she grieved to see the “silent sorrow” that was preying on her young heart. Neither could she offer consolation, for the subject was one to which she could not prudently allude. Her discovery, painful as it was to her, was only manifested outwardly by an increase of tenderness in her tone and manner when address-

ing her young friend. But it placed a restraint on her natural candor, for she could not, or would not speak of the happiness that filled her own heart, the joy that pervaded her entire being,—certainly not to Alice Murray, dear and trusted as she was !

Betty had called in some assistance that day of a high professional character in the culinary line, and by ten o'clock, when Jan, after taking a last exulting look at the table he had been setting, went to the drawing-room door to announce supper, it was no wonder that his tone was more magisterial than usual, for the table his genius had decorated was fit for the banquet of a prince. The old family plate, brought by the first American Von Wiegel to New Amsterdam, and still the wonder of garish, frippery, electro-plated New York, glittered that night on the supper-table amid fruit and flowers and flashing wines whose hues were as varied as their vintage, and all reflecting the flood of light streaming down from the massive, many-branched *candelabra*.

It was a time and a scene to make hearts glad, and hearts were glad, for no sadness could withstand the genial influence of the hour. Montague, enlivened by the sunshine of happiness, appeared in a different light altogether ; no cloud rested on his noble brow, no cold reserve shrouded the brilliant qualities of his mind, or the exquisite refinement of his feelings and sentiments. Gerald was delighted to see him talk and act in the old familiar way, and Mr. Murray, notwithstanding his prepossession

against him, could not resist the ineffable charm that hung around him. Little did the good old man suspect that every look and every word of Montague's, on that last night, were treasured all too deeply in one gentle heart whose peace was dearer to him than his own life. So he only thought of Robert, and often that evening he murmured to himself: "Poor Robert! small, indeed, were *your* chances against him!"

Madam Von Wiegel looked and listened with a smile now bright and happy, now sad and tender, on her placid countenance, as the charm of the present or the memory of the past filled her mind. And Bertha—oh! it was hard to say *what* Bertha felt, as her ear drank in Edgar's voice, and her eyes, often filled with tears, ran over the lineaments of that dear face that was soon to be a memory—a cherished dream. What a world of sad yet sweet intelligence was exchanged in their glance when their eyes met, and how many times that evening did the dark cold shade of the morrow's parting fall athwart the brightness of the present moment. Once Edgar Montague whispered when he saw the tear that Bertha would fain have hidden: "Even so it is, dearest,

" 'Life is made up of miserable hours ;

And all of which we craved a brief possessing,
For which we wasted wishes, hopes and powers,
Comes with some fatal drawback on the blessing,
We might have been !' " *

* Miss Landon.

"How will it be to-morrow, Bertha! when we come to part, 'it may be for years, and it may be for ever?'"

"Nay, when that moment comes," said Bertha proudly, "I shall not forget that I am a soldier's wife!"

"There spoke *my* Bertha!" whispered Edgar again, his eyes sparkling with exultation. "Gentle and loving—high and noble, such did my fancy paint you in the dark days when I feared you were lost to me forever!"

And Bertha kept her word. When they parted next day no outward sign betrayed the mighty grief that swelled her heart. Were it not for the deathly palor of her cheek and brow, and the tremulous motion of her bloodless lip, none could suspect the wordless, tearless anguish with which she returned his last fond greeting, and saw him leave her, perhaps forever, almost on their wedding-day.



CHAPTER XXIII.

MATTERS IN GENERAL.

WE will now for the last time pay our respects to the Gallaghers, Fogartys and Hacketts. The failure of the Speculators' Bank, as, perhaps, the shrewd reader may already have guessed, turned out no so very great misfortune after all. It is true, the family in falling from their high estate, had fallen to a corresponding depth in the minds of all truly fashionable people, but that was only natural, for when did misfortune or humiliation ever retain a place in the mind or heart of fashion—supposing it to have those useful appendages of humanity? This gave Tom Gallagher little trouble, for Tom had (we say it under the rose) but a sorry opinion of “stylish people” in general, and was an incorrigible heretic in regard to the doctrines of fashion. The truth was that he seemed to feel far more at home in the country cottage than he ever did in the town mansion, and were it anything short of his whole fortune he would gladly have purchased the comparative ease and freedom he now enjoyed with regard to his wearing apparel. Good Mrs. Gallagher and even her daughters seemed to have got the lucky idea in their heads that nobody noticed poor pa, or the cut or condition of his upper or lower garments

since that oily individual Mr. O'Blarney of the Speculators' Bank had whisked away with his money. I regret to say that the ladies were not quite so philosophical with regard to themselves and they struggled hard—in fact desperately—to retain a foothold somewhere on the verge of fashionable society, whence they might catch a view, however distant, of the glittering world from whose golden gates they were now as effectually debarred as was the Peri of the Eastern tale what time she

“ ———— at the gate

Of Eden stood, disconsolate ;

And as she listened to the springs

Of life within, like music flowing,

And caught the light upon her wings,

Thro' the half-opened portal glowing,

She wept to think her recreant race

Should e'er have lost that glorious place !”

Mrs. Frost and Mrs. Winter were the most to be pitied of all the family, and yet somehow they managed, after a little while, to carry their heads as high as ever, and almost make people forget their Saratoga matches, made “in evil hour.” Mag, especially, throwing shame overboard sailed smoothly along in the bark of confidence, and stared the staring world out of countenance, till at last it went on its way and left her, and Ellie, too, in peace—if not “the world forgetting,” at least by “the world forgot.” It was a fortunate thing for both sisters that they were not troubled, either of them, with any painful degree of sensibility, and although their

prospects *were* blighted, as far as matrimony was concerned, they cared comparatively little so long as they could keep up appearances in regard to dress—minus, however, the *moire antiques*, which were now antique remembrances to the luckless Gsllagher belles.

Miss Fanny tried hard to keep up the prestige of her greatness, when the greatness itself had departed for ever and aye, but somehow she didn't succeed. Let her put on ever such airs, she couldn't get people to look up to her as they used to do, or at least appear to do, when she was prime minister in the realm of No. 66, and ruled, as a queen, over all who crossed the threshold of that spendid mansion. Poor Fanny! she found, to her cost, that lofty airs don't impress people—but, “quite the con-tra-ry, which is remarkable”—as Rory O'More, or somebody like him, says—when they figure in a two-story cottage with cane-bottomed chairs, and all such vulgar appurtenances.

The worst of it was that, what with the unlucky Saratoga matches, and the still more unlucky defalcation of Mr. O'Blarney and the Speculators' Bank, together with another little reason which, though not to be told “in Gath,” no, nor whispered “in the streets of Ascalon,” must needs be whispered in the reader's ear, viz.: that Miss Fanny's mirror no longer told a flattering tale, but actually began to warn her that if ever she meant to annex any of Adam's male descendants it must be done

without loss of time, for alas ! that I should have to write it :

“*She* look’d in the glass, and she thought she could trace,
A sort of a wrinkle, or two !”

But do you think Miss Fanny sat down under the grief of this alarming physiognomical discovery, and began to sing that dolorous ditty :

“Nobody coming to marry me,
Nobody coming to woo—
Nobody coming to marry me,
Oh dear ! what shall I do ?”

Not she, indeed ; so craven a thought never could or never did enter into Miss Gallagher’s well-dressed head. She made up her mind that she would annex somebody, which she did in gallant style, and who does the reader think she annexed. Why who but Atty Garrell,—don’t laugh, reader, pray don’t ! for Atty was now Tom Gallagher’s partner, and his name was represented by the two letters *Co.* on the newly-painted sign “Gallagher & Co.,” which swayed to the breezes that found their way through Centre Market, in front of Tom’s still well-furnished stall. It turned out in Tom’s greatest need that his faithful friend and counsellor had a couple of thousand dollars of well-earned money in one of the City Savings’ Banks, which money cheerfully and indeed beseechingly placed at Tom’s disposal enabled that worthy man to weather the storm successfully. In the fullness of his gratitude he took Atty into partnership, a step which he never had cause to regret, nor Fanny

her still greater condescension in the matter of annexation; whether Atty found the conjugal yoke too heavy for his spare shoulders is quite a different thing, and beyond our power, moreover, to declare,—so, hoping that Mrs. Arthur Garrell (*vide* her visiting card) did *not* rule her meek yokefellow with a rod of iron, we will leave them in the snug nest which Fanny was just the dame to keep in excellent order, in all its tiny parts.

The last I heard of the family was that one of the younger daughters—Annie, I think—had asked, and obtained from Mrs. Montague the situation of seamstress and lady's maid when the family left Rheinfeldt House for Ireland very soon after the major's departure. Although there **was** a time when the Gallaghers would have taken the offer of any such engagement as a very great insult, those days had, perhaps, happily passed away, and Annie herself, who the reader will remember was all along her father's favorite—having a fair share of good sense, was not long in the family of Mrs. Montague,—who, knowing the history of the Gallaghers, took a special interest in the really prepossessing girl—till she became both better and wiser, impressed with sounder and more judicious views of things, and far in advance of all the other members of the family, her father alone excepted. Before she had been many months an inmate of Castle Mahon—where she was given in charge to the dignified and venerable house-keeper and never consigned to the servants'-hall—

Annie Gallagher wrote in one of her letters to her sister Eliza: "I can now see, dear Eliza, what was the grand fault with us all in the days of our short-lived prosperity—we were too much given to display, and straining after effect, and busied ourselves entirely about dress and all such things, to the exclusion of matters far more important—in a word, I can now see the difference that exists between *Taste* and *Fashion*—the *Old* and the *New*, in other words the quiet, easy, natural life of those to whom wealth and position are not new, when compared with the empty, artificial, make-believe life of people who are, as we were ourselves, wholly devoted to show. Since I came to live with dear Mrs. Montague and that sweet old lady, her mother, I have learned many, many things which will, I hope, be useful to you all if I live to return amongst you, which will not be for some time, though, as I am too happy here to wish to leave it at present. Tell father I went myself with the money to his Aunt Biddy, but there was no Aunt Biddy there to give it to—she died six months before—so I gave the money to the parish priest to have Masses said for her soul, and I gave a pound or two of my own to the people she used to lodge with. So poor Aunt Biddy is gone at last. Heaven rest her soul!"

A year or two after that, the youngest of the Miss Gallagher's, Janie by name, was chosen for a helpmate by Willy Fogarty, so that the alliance between the families was strengthened by a double bond, and,

I believe, this second union turned out no worse than the first, but rather a shade better, owing, perhaps, to the salutary depression of the family thermometer. So, with their daughters thus variously disposed of, Tom Gallagher and his thrifty spouse went jogging along their remaining path of life contentedly enough, considering all that had come and gone—the stall in Centre Market kept up its first-class reputation, and the cottage by the Third avenue gradually assumed a more tasteful and attractive appearance, pretty without, neat within, and as hospitable a house for the size of it as ever was seen about New York—so said all comers, or goers rather, and of course they were the best judges. If I thought it would never reach Mrs. Gallagher's ears, I would tell the reader in confidence what Tom used to say when he sat by moonlight, or gaslight, "the centre of the ring"—a smoky ring, too, it was—composed of Atty—I beg Mrs. Garrell's pardon—Arthur Garrell—though, by the way, with Tom he was still "Atty" and nothing else—William H. Fogarty, John McConoghy, now the father of a couple of promising juveniles—Henry Hackett and Samuel C., his favorite son-in-law:—"I'll tell you what it is," Tom would say, glancing around to see that Ellen was not within earshot, "I'll tell you what it is—that villain O'Blarney done me the best turn that ever one man done another—small thanks to *him*, though, but, I declare I never knew what peace was till himself and the Old Boy flew away with my

money! Now that's God's truth, whether you believe it or not!" They did believe it, and, what is more, they had all suspected as much before.

The Fogartys were still, as their neighbors said, "at the top of the wheel," in worldly prosperity. They were, indeed, one of those highly-favored families with whom everything they undertake seems to succeed,—and that through all their branches. Every one who knows anything of the current affairs of the world around, must have observed at least one such family within the circle of their acquaintance. The fact is, the Fogartys were, in every sense of the word, a well-doing family; they had all just enough of ambition to urge them to laudable exertion, with a corresponding degree of self-respect that made them value independence, and kept them from stooping to mean actions. They all inherited, moreover, from their father, and in a lesser degree from their mother, a certain shrewdness and good sense that contributed largely to their success in life, and kept them from exposing themselves to ridicule by any sort of exaggeration, or arrogant assumption of superiority over their own equals. They were, consequently, beloved and respected, for people are always willing to recognize merit in those who do not thrust themselves offensively forward, or demand deference as a right. As citizens, William H. Fogarty and his sons—as they successively took their place on the stage of life,—were public-spirited, and ever willing to go into any movement having the

good of the people in view: whilst as Christians, they were useful and active members of the congregation to which they belonged, with free hearts and open hands where public or private charity was in question. Then they were all, as might be expected, united amongst themselves by the tenderest bonds of affection, and it so happened that those who married into the family all fell into their ways, some more, some less, and caught the benign influence of their public and private virtues. They were a happy and a prosperous family, the Fogartys, as they well deserved to be, and we can have little doubt that when human affliction came upon them, as come it must to all the children of Adam—they bore it as Christians calmly and submissively, as coming from the hand of God, and in accordance with the solemn decree pronounced at the beginning of the world.

And now for Henry Hackett and his family, of whom our old-young favorite Michael, and the two younger sisters, remain to be accounted for.

Things had gone well, I am proud to say, with the Hacketts, also, during the two or three years before we return to take a parting look at them. Hackett's had come to be the best general grocery in that part of the ward, and there were now some three or four young men waiting on the customers; amongst them, however, you would look in vain for Michael, for Michael having made considerable progress in his classical studies under the kind favor of the Von Wiegels, had, subsequently through their

influence, obtained admission to one of our Ecclesiastical Seminaries, where he was preparing for Holy Orders, and those who knew Michael Hackett's solid worth, and were able to appreciate his mental endowments, had high hopes of his future usefulness in the great work of the ministry. Those who meet him in after years in the venerated garb of the priesthood will hardly recognize him as the Michael Hackett of our earlier pages, for the precocious gravity of his demeanor, and his rather oldish little face, are now merged in the calm, collected mien, and the still thin but well-formed and highly-intellectual features of an earnest and devoted minister of the Gospel, a priest of the Most High, fully conscious of His high prerogative, and prepared faithfully to discharge its sacred duties. Yes, Michael Hackett has more than realized even his father's expectations.

By the time Michael left College with the honorable prefix of *Reverend* to his name, Miss Ann-Wilhelmina had obtained an advantageous settlement for life, on condition of promising obedience to a certain contractor in good circumstances—a widower with one little girl of six for all encumbrance—and Ann would have thought the match in all respects desirable, had it not been for one unlucky fact—her spouse's name was *McGurk*, with the no less odious prefix of Peter—"Peter McGurk! Good Lord! what a name!" poor Ann-Wilhelmina used to exclaim, with tears in her eyes. But that was only at

first. After a few months the vulgarity of the name was soon forgotten in the delightful whirl of the operation known as "cutting a dash," for it so happened that Peter's mind was far more vulgar than his name, and finding himself by a few years of extra "good luck" in possession of more money than he ever expected to have called his own, he thought he could make no better use of it than to "cut a dash," and his wife being of the same mind, they both went to work with energy and determination cutting their dash right and left, in which profitable and honorable occupation we shall leave them, unable to say how long it continued, from the simple fact that we never had an opportunity of sounding the depth of Peter McGurk's purse which was, of course, the measure of Peter McGurk's *dash*.

It was not with Henry Hackett's good will, the reader may believe, that his burly new son-in-law whirled Ann-Wilhelmina into the vortex of fashion and fashionable expense, but it was Peter McGurk's maxim that the man that made money knew best how to spend it, in which sage opinion he was confirmed and supported by his bosom-friend and counsellor, Mrs. Ann-Wilhelmina McGurk. Both entertained a thorough contempt for Henry's judgment, and made no scruple of telling their private friends confidentially that he was little better than a fool, or, at least, a *fogie* of the oldest description.

So Henry Hackett was fain to let them "run their rig," and see how far it would carry them. His own

business was flourishing to his heart's content—his health was good and his peace of mind ruffled by but one ripple—that ripple his daughter Ann's perverse folly. His youngest daughter, now plain Mary, was entirely devoted to him, and in conjunction with Sarah and her husband, made it her study to promote his comfort and happiness. Indeed Mary had been known to declare solemnly that she never would leave her father as long as God spared him to her; now that he had but her, she'd see if she couldn't make up to him for the loss of all the rest. But what would she do, people used to ask, when her father was taken from her—why, then, she would go and keep house, for Michael. Henry, hearing of this affectionate resolution of Mary's, was in the habit of saying, in her absence, though, that Mary wouldn't be a burden to any one when he was gone, for, he thanked God, he'd be able to leave her what would keep her independent all her days, and then she'd be sure to have plenty of friends and a choice of homes every day of her life.

Our readers must not suppose that I am losing sight of the Murrays. They are almost the last whom I would willingly overlook, and if I have not succeeded in interesting the reader in that amiable family, I have only to say that I am sorry for it. It was a sad parting all round when the Von Wiegels and the Murrays came to part, after years of kindly, genial, and almost uninterrupted intercourse. Their life had been so much together that they could

scarcely realize living apart. This feeling was common to father and daughter, and they both missed the Von Wiegels quite as much as if they had formed the same family. Their social intercourse had been of the most agreeable nature, and even in their charities they were more or less associated. For long after Rheinfeldt House had passed into the hands of another branch of the Von Wiegels, a settled gloom appeared to have fallen on the household of Mr. Murray, and the old gentleman was so troubled himself that he was not surprised to see Alice sad and dejected, fading away, as it were, in loneliness. He very naturally supposed, too, that she, like himself, mourned for Robert's disappointment as well as their own loss. Nothing, therefore, could be more natural, or more easily accounted for. There were extra demands on Alice's time, moreover, which kept her more than usual out of her father's sight. Neither did Mr. Murray object to this, for he knew that Bertha had left her old pensioners in Alice's care with a couple of hundred dollars as a reserve-fund for their use. So that this, with the care of her own poor, and her light but constant duties as housekeeper in their small *menage* were, he thought, quite sufficient to account for anything unusual in that way. Time rolled on, however, and just six months after Madam Von Wiegel and her daughter left New York, a letter came from Robert with the astounding intelligence that he had married the young and beautiful daugh-

ter of a wealthy Southern planter, who, if inferior to Bertha in many respects, had, as Robert said or wrote, rather, the very great merit of being very much in love with him, and from what he had seen of her, even in her paternal home, was, moreover, gentle and amiable, and likely to make him a very dear good little wife. Of course, added Robert, my Stella is not *Bertha*—nobody ever was or can be like Bertha (“poor fellow! poor Robert!” sighed the father and sister, “he may find Stella to suit *him* better!”) but then—she loves me—I know she does—and I am sure I am trying hard to love *her*—so I dare say we shall be a very happy couple—by and by. Stella knows you both already, you can’t think how well, and she wishes of all things to see you, here or there, she don’t care which—though I rather think she would give *there* the preference having never seen our great Gotham. You will be glad to hear—though I flatter myself you would have guessed it had I not told you—that Stella is a good Catholic of French descent—an old Vendean family—connected by blood with the great Laroche-jacquelin, the hero of La Vendee! In luck, again! I hear you say—Stella ought to be good—and so she is, *mon tres cher pere, et ma belle et chere Alice*, Stella is good, as good as she is pretty, and when you see her you will understand what *that* means.

P. S.—Have you heard lately from—from Madam Von Wiegel? Has his Excellency returned from

India yet ? Though I scarcely think he has—or will for months to come. God grant he may return safe—for the sake of one whom I shall not name. It were hard, indeed, if he fell now—in the prime of his noble manhood—and far away from *her*—his bride !”

“Poor Robert !” sighed the father again, and the sister echoed the sigh, but there was a deep sorrow in her sigh, and a palor on her fair brow that her father happily for himself did not notice. Sweet Alice ! what a thrill of emotion did those last words of Robert’s awake in your gentle heart—how deep the chord they struck there—how low and mournful the tone that vibrated through her heart-strings !

But Alice Murray was a Christian in the true sense of the word, and loving and gentle as she was, she knew how to fight, ay ! and to conquer the feelings of her heart when they came between her and “that peace which surpasseth all understanding”—the peace of a pure heart and a self-denying spirit. Alice Murray was no lack-a-daisical, sentimental damsel, proud to pine away in hopeless love, “sighing like furnace” all day long, and by night confiding her miseries to the moon, for want of other auditors—no ! our sweet Alice was a Christian maiden, strong in her sense of right, and brave to resist temptation. And she *did* resist it, nobly and successfully, by the practice of prayer and other good works, and before Bertha and Montague met again, she had learned to rejoice in the prospect of

their re-union, and pray fervently, sincerely for their happiness. Some modern lyrist has sung

“ Who can school the heart's affections ? ”

But I answer fearlessly, the Christian *can*—the Catholic Christian—by the aid of supernatural grace and strength from above. No passion so strong, no feeling so potent but what *may* be overcome, by the power of prayer and the graces obtained through the Sacraments. And so it was with Alice Murray; and a blessing seemed visibly to rest on her heroic efforts, for her health improved so rapidly that her delighted father could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses, and it was not till the old family doctor—a valued friend, too—assured him on his professional honor that the alarming symptoms had actually disappeared, that the old gentleman could be at all convinced of the decided and permanent improvement which had taken place. Once thoroughly convinced, however, his heart was so inundated with joy that the sunshine of his spirit came back in all its former brightness—superinduced, however, by the unexpected good news of Robert's happy marriage, and Alice had the additional consolation of seeing her beloved father as blithe and merry as ever of old. This, in itself, would have been a sufficient reward for her heroic and successful struggle with her own heart.

Let us now go back for a few brief moments to the day following Bertha's marriage. Early that

forenoon a lady of rare and most voluptuous beauty—the beauty of mature womanhood, entirely Southern in its character—lay on a sofa in a private parlor in the Astor House, her face buried in the cushions over which her dark curls lay in rich but wild profusion. A daily paper lay on her knee, and her jewelled finger still rested on the paragraph that had probably opened the flood-gates of her heart to this burst of passionate emotion. Raising her head at last, she shook back her glossy raven curls, and dashing away the tears that trembled on her long Circasian-like lashes, she looked again at the paper, and read in a voice broken with sobs: “Married at Rheinfeldt House, in this city, yesterday, June —, by the Rev. Mr. —, pastor of St. — Catholic Church, Edgar Oswald Montague, Esq., second son of the late, and brother of the present Lord Viscount Dunmore, of Dunmore Castle, Co. Cork, Ireland, Major in Her Britannic Majesty’s —th regiment of foot, to Bertha, only daughter of the late Jacob Von Wiegel, Esq., of this city.”

“It is even so, then,” murmured the proud beauty, as the paper fell from her hands and she sank again on the sofa, with a face of ashy whiteness and a strange, ghastly smile parting her blanched lips. “They are married—*she* is his wife—he has taken her to his bosom—and I am undone!—oh wretched, wretched hour! Despised—shunned—and by *him*—baffled—disappointed—with every hope blighted. and the fire of an unquenchable passion burning in

my heart—what is to become of me?—how am I to live?—oh Edgar,” she sobbed, wringing her hands in tearless agony, “you cannot know how I love you, or you would pity, instead of hating me, as now you do! And she whom you have taken to the heaven of your heart—can *she* love you as I did—alas! as I still do? Oh no! no! no! she cannot—she will love by rule—within the bounds of religion,” her lip curled in disdain—“but *my* love knows no bounds—it is an ocean measureless and vast!—and yet you cast me from you as a worthless thing—not even the common civility of a visit for me, though his proud heart knew I had traversed sea and land to meet him once again! Oh misery! there is the cracked voice of my tormentor at the door!”—and snatching up the paper, she darted from the room by an opposite door, nor stopped till she had locked herself in her dressing-room. We need hardly say that the mourner was Lady Susan.

“Dear me!” said Sir Henry Burke, entering on tip-toe, and looking around inquiringly, “dear me! I thought her ladyship had been here!” He retreated again, and was soon knocking, or rather tapping at the dressing-room door. It was long before he could gain admission, and when he did, he was easily diverted from the contemplation of Lady Susan’s evident discomposure, by the rather snappish announcement that she had been taking a nap, and wished she could have taken it undisturbed. Sir Henry humbly apologized for his untimely intru-

sion, "but I had something so strange to tell you," said he, "that I couldn't possibly wait. Do you know, Lady Susan! what I saw in the papers this morning?—why, the marriage of Major Montague and Miss Von Wiegel—your ladyship's old friends—were they not? Did *you* see the account? There it is!" pointing to the paper in his hand.

"Thank you!" said Lady Susan coldly, putting the paper aside with her hand, "I saw it. Do you suppose *I* take any interest in the affairs of either one or the other of those you have mentioned—if I had done so, I should certainly have seen them before now! You would do me a favor, Sir Henry! not to disturb me again when you have reason to think me asleep, whether Births, Deaths, or Marriages attract your attention in the papers—wonder as you will, but let *me*—rest in peace!" she added in an under tone. "Sir Henry!" raising her voice to reach his dulled ear, "we shall go this afternoon to West Point and some of those other places on the Hudson! You will order a carriage for *one*!"

"Certainly, Lady Susan, certainly!" and Sir Henry withdrew, well pleased with his commission, for hitherto he had been trying in vain to urge Lady Susan to visit "the Lions" of the Empire City, chiefest of which is its beautiful river with the old historic scenes that gird its margin.

Left to herself Lady Susan sank again into her wild and troubled reverie, now flinging herself on a

sofa, now starting to her feet and pacing the room in strong agitation, muttering strangely to herself in fits and starts. At last she composed herself in some degree with the promise sternly spoken: "I will see him again, though it were but to die at his feet! Till then, farewell, Edgar Montague! farewell my hopes of happiness!"



CHAPTER XXIV.

SHORT AND SWEET.

THERE was joy at Castle Mahon when Madam Von Wiegel and her daughter returned thither after years of absence. Those at home were little changed. Uncle Gerald had grown somewhat stouter, Uncle Walter somewhat thinner, Aunt Helen's matronly form more imposing, and Eveleen's bright face had lost much of its lightsome gaiety, though her manner was just as usual, piquant, lively and attractive. In reply to her aunt and cousin's friendly reproaches for the silence observed in her letters regarding Bellew, she laughed merrily, and saucily replied: "I was only paying people back in their own coin, Aunt Lydia! The confidence others"—she glanced at Bertha—"placed in me, I placed in them. Poor Gerald!" she added, and a shade of sadness fell on her sunny face and the light faded from her laughing eyes, "poor Gerald! if I had only *seen* him before he left for India!"

Choking with the sudden gush of feeling that welled up from her inmost heart, Eveleen darted from the room, leaving her sympathizing friends to discuss the subject with affectionate interest unrestrained by her presence.

Amongst the first visitors who came to welcome

the new arrivals was Lord Dunmore, whose failing health had rendered it necessary for him to retire from diplomatic life, and seek a renewal of health and spirits amongst his native shades in the balmy air of green-valleyed Munster. Disfigured as Alfred's face had been by the devastating small-pox, the features were still regular, with so sweet an expression pervading all that Bertha, disposed as she was to sympathize with him, regarded the young nobleman with sisterly interest from the first moment of their acquaintance. Though not quite so tall as Edgar, his form, too, was graceful and symmetrical, whilst the pensive tone of his voice and the extreme gentleness of his manner won insensibly on the heart. Different as the brothers were, and immeasurably superior as Edgar was in mind as well as in person, there was still something in and about one that reminded you of the other, and that alone went far to establish Lord Dunmore in the warmest sisterly regard of Bertha. And he, on his part, loved Bertha for her own sake and that of his brother, to whom he was devotedly attached. He had been in Edgar's confidence long enough to know how strong and enduring was his love for Bertha Von Wiegel, and how entirely that love filled his heart. And now when he saw Bertha Montague with his own corporal eyes and heard her speak, and felt how tenderly she loved the brother of whom he was so proud, so fond, his pure, loving heart yearned towards her, and never brother loved a sister as he loved her. It was the

delight of both to sit and talk of *him* so far away—in the midst of danger—so dearly loved—so vividly remembered, and each, in turn, revived the other's drooping spirits by a fresh infusion of hope into the darkness of doubt and despondency. With a sort of hesitation and a quickening of the heart-pulse for which she could scarcely account, Bertha asked Lord Dunmore whether he had left his daughter in Madrid. A smile of arch intelligence lit up Alfred's face as he replied: "No, I could not bear to leave her behind—she is at Dunmore, where an aged lady of much experience in teaching has her education in charge. As *my* daughter—the living image of my lost Isabella—I know you will like her,—though, perhaps, not quite so well," he added with a look that covered Bertha's face with blushes, "as if she were only *my niece*, with the captivating likeness of the noblest of all the Montagues! Ah Bertha! how little you know of Edgar when you could be made to believe him guilty of a low, base amour. Forgive me, though, sweet sister mine, I meant not to reproach you! I know how skilfully the web of calumny was woven, and as Edgar was but too happy to forgive your involuntary injustice, so am I, too!—let us think not of the past, but rather look to the future. When my brother returns——"

"But oh, Alfred! if he should *not* return?"

"He will return—how can you doubt it, Bertha Montague? Have you not half the old women around Castle Mahon praying for his safe return,

and are not your own hours chiefly spent in prayer for the same intent? Will not the angels have guard over him, even for your dear sake?—oh doubt it not!”

Lord Dunmore began in a jesting tone, but before he ended his pale cheek glowed, and his voice quivered with emotion.

Bertha, much surprised, was about to ask him how he came to know all this, but her mother and Uncle Walter coming in at the moment she cared not to pursue the subject just then.

It was true, nevertheless, what Alfred said, regarding her private devotions, and a few weeks after that conversation her Uncle Gerald had, at her request, a small chapel or oratory put up in the Druid Grove, within sight of the old Judgment-Seat, and on its little altar many a Mass was offered up for the temporal and spiritual welfare of Montague and Bellew—for they were ever associated in the pious prayers of the family. There, too, would Bertha spend whole hours, sometimes with her mother, aunt, or cousin, but oftener alone, communing with her own heart, and contemplating in silence and solitude the dear image that was ever before her eyes. But her thoughts were not sad ones—
anxious and troubled as they were at times, there was hope glimmering through the darkness, and when she saw the evening star peep out through the golden mists of evening, she would say to her own heart, “Even so shall the light of *his* presence beam

on my eyes !” and when the crescent moon monthly appeared in the heavens, Bertha would murmur, “Hail fair moon ! before you have gone your allotted round my Edgar may be here !” Yes, her life was a life of hope, and a life of prayer.

Letters came occasionally—as often, indeed, as the unsettled state of those Indian provinces would permit—from the loved and absent. Characteristic the letters were; Montague’s deep, earnest, and impassioned—Bellew’s (to Eveleen) half gay, half sad, sportive yet tender, always hopeful, never desponding.

In the drawing-room at Castle Mahon a new and beautiful portrait graced the wall, close by the door of the conservatory. It was a copy of the picture of Edgar Montague which hung in the picture-gallery at Dunmore. This was a present to Bertha from Lord Dunmore, who had secretly employed an eminent artist to take the copy very soon after Mrs. Montague’s arrival at Castle Mahon. This was an agreeable surprise for Bertha, but a far more agreeable one was not far distant. Twelve months had passed—and oh ! how long they seemed to Bertha, for, true it is that

“Expectation clogs the wings of time
With more than leaden weight.”

Battles had been fought in India, and lists of the “killed and wounded” had been published, and some one of Bertha’s tender friends had glanced over each mournful list before it was suffered to

meet her or Eveleen's eyes, but happily the name of Montague or Bellew was not on any of them—save once when Major Montague was reported as “slightly wounded in the sword arm.” Even that had filled Bertha with increased anxiety from which she was still suffering when one evening late in September she sat alone and in tears in her little woodland chapel.

“The evening sun was sinking

With a mild light calm and mellow,”

but the golden beauty of the sunset, nor the varied sheen of the autumn woods could cheer the heart that was beginning to despond, or restore one tint of freshness to the cheek that was pale with long watching and that hope which “deferr’d maketh the heart sick.”

All at once a quick light step crushed the withered leaves which already lay thick on the narrow pathway—a shadow darkened the sunlight at the door, and a voice sweeter than harp or lute—a voice low and soft and tender as the sigh of the autumn breeze—spoke one word, “*Bertha!*”

Starting from her mournful reverie Bertha Montague looked up and there stood Edgar, paler and thinner than when they parted, but still there in very deed. His eyes were smiling on her as of old, and when she sprang to his arms with a cry of joy he pressed her to his heart and held her there as though he feared to lose her again on the moment.

“Were those tears for me?” he fondly asked,

"but I *know* they were," and he kissed them away. "How pale you are, dear love! Oh Bertha! you have suffered!"

"And you, Edgar?—you are sadly altered. What of your wound?"

"Think not of it, Bertha! but for it I should not now be here and the bliss of this moment were worth fifty such wounds. If Gerald could only have come with me I should have been but too, too happy."

"He is not with you, then?"

Montague shook his head. "As he had not the good fortune to be wounded, or put on the sick list, there was no possibility of his obtaining leave of absence—indeed, he could not think of asking it."

"Poor Eveleen!" murmured Bertha, her eyes filling with tears of sympathy, "have you seen her yet?"

"Just for a moment—when I heard you were here I rejoiced to know that I should find you alone, and scarcely waited to shake hands with your mother and the rest. What a charming little temple you have here, Bertha!"

"It is a temple of love, Edgar! meant as a retreat where I could, unseen by mortal eye, weep and pray for my dearer self—exposed to danger, perhaps to death."

"Take care, Bertha! you will make me too proud!" whispered Montague; "you forget that I am—*Don Bellianus*! apropos to that, I was glad to see by your

last letter that Robert Murray has been endeavoring to console himself for the loss he had sustained by taking to himself a wife. But, dearest! I have had such a strange letter from Lady Susan, dated from New York a few days after my departure."

"And what did she say, Edgar?" cried Bertha, raising herself in his arms till she looked in his face.

"She said, amongst many other wild and wicked things, that she would not leave *our* married life untroubled, at least, that she would raise a spirit which we should find more terrible than was the ghost of Samuel to Saul of old—and that"—he stopped.

"Nay tell me, Edgar! tell me all!"

"She said, sweet love! that she would dash the cup of joy from your lips when you least expected. But we can now defy her malice, else had I never told you of her dark threats."

"Unhappy woman!" said Bertha in a tone half pity, half horror, "she can never now disturb our peace. Heard you not, dear Edgar! of her sad fate?"

"Surely no! what was it?—how?"

"She and Sir Henry were both lost in the ill-fated steamer ———, whose mysterious disappearance on her passage from New York to Liverpool is still the wonder of the hour!"

"Great God! and she perished in her sins—her dark deadly sins!"

"With pain I answer 'yes!'—it is even so—Sir

Henry and Lady Susan Burke were the first names on the list of passengers lost !”

“How wonderful are the ways of God !” said Edgar with solemn reverence, “how terrible His vengeance !—poor Lady Susan ! now I can forgive her—before I found it hard to do so !”

“Oh, Edgar !” sighed Bertha, the tears streaming unheeded from her eyes, “I pitied even more than I blamed her at the worst of times—how could I but pity her ? she loved *you*—not wisely but too well—and none could feel like me what she must have felt in losing you. To her darkened mind it appeared that I had robbed her of your love.”

“She could not think so,” said Montague sternly, “she knew she never *had* my love—no, not for one brief moment—and she knew, moreover, that the more she strove to gain it the farther she was from succeeding. No, no, Bertha ! even had she never been affianced to my brother, she never could have been my choice. You know it, Bertha ! you know there was but *one*—but one in all the world that ever could, or ever did, awaken love in me !”

“And that *one* a marble image, with a stony heart—how hard your lot is, Edgar Montague !”

“Very hard, indeed, *Bertha Montague* ! only that I happen to have and to hold the marble image now and I shall try if I have not power to soften it !” The rich glow that crimsoned Bertha’s cheek had not yet died away when her mother and all the family—Eveleen alone excepted—made their appear-

ance at the door, claiming a share of Major Montague's attention.

And now what more have I to say before taking leave of those who have so long occupied *my* best attention? Is it necessary for me to say that Edgar Montague and Bertha were happy in each other? If it be, I have done but little justice to either in presenting them to the reader. They were happy—as happy as mortals can be on earth, and Madam Von Wiegel was happier than she ever expected to have been in this world, and what is more, Eveleen and Bellew were happy, too, for in three months after Montague's arrival, Bellew's regiment was ordered home, and the long-looked-for wedding took place at Castle Mahon.

CONCLUSION.

Now that *Old and New* is brought to a close, I would make a few remarks connected with the subject-matter of the story, before the reader and I part company. In the first place, I have heard, from various quarters, both in and out of New York, that many people suppose the characters in this story to be photographs of real men and women. This I here distinctly and formally deny. That the world around us does abound with such characters as Mrs. Gallagher and her daughters, the three Miss Hacketts—as the reader first saw them—with Lil Smiths and Dora Bradys *ad infinitum*, is a fact patent to all.

That Greens and Browns, Frosts and Winters, are floating through American, and especially New York society, thick as midges in the sunbeam, no one will pretend to deny, and that many a hard-working, industrious father has the mortification of seeing his fashionably-educated young daughters throw themselves away on such two-legged butterflies—tailors' blocks set in motion—is just as undeniable, but that I have had any particular family, or individual in view in delineating my characters, I altogether deny. They are one and all the creatures of imagination—some, perhaps, of memory (at least to some extent), but not one of present existence. That so many of the actors in my drama of life have been identified with living persons proves to *my* satisfaction, at least, that I have succeeded in holding the mirror up to nature, but I should be sorry, indeed, if the cap, being fitted to so many heads, pressed too hard on the bumps of some crania. It has been said, too, that I have dealt too hardly with persons who rise by their own industry from an inferior position in society. That is a charge still more unfounded than the other, and its absurdity will, I think, strike every impartial and enlightened reader. Did not Tom Gallagher rise with his family, yet Tom is held up for the reader's respect, and so is Henry Hackett, and John McConoghy, and the Fogartys generally, yet they all raised themselves from an obscure position by honest and persevering exertion. No, assuredly, it is not the

ascent of our people in the social scale which I have satirized, but the follies and extravagant pretensions of some amongst them when they do succeed in gaining a position. I would have them make fortunes if they honestly and properly can, but when the fortunes are made, I would have them used and enjoyed in a reasonable, temperate manner, without rushing into every extreme of fashion or adopting every whim of folly in order to spend them. Much good may be done in the world by those who have money at command, provided they know how to use it. It will undoubtedly give them many advantages over their less fortunate fellow-creatures, but the unlimited use of money, or rather the abuse of it, far from bringing peace and happiness to the possessor, or winning the world's respect, may only be productive of misery, and excite ridicule and contempt. People who make fortunes in America would do well to remember that Fashion is not only a capricious deity, but a most unsafe guide to follow—an ignis fatuus many degrees worse than our childhood's terror "Will o' the wisp." Her requirements are incessant and most exacting, and there is no tyranny so slavish as hers, for those who worship at her shrine have no will of their own, but live, and move, and breathe under her dictation. The life of a "fashionable lady" is a continual thralldom, in which all the powers of the mind and all the affections of the heart, nay, all the moments of life, are pressed into the service of despotic Fashion. Envy,

jealousy, deceit, and all uncharitableness follow in the train of that ruthless tyrant, and all society is made to feel more or less its malign influence. It fritters away the finest intellect and petrifies the warmest heart—destroys all noble sentiments, and, in fine, weighs like an incubus on our so-called *civilized society*, more or less demoralizing every class in the community.

Taste, as opposed to *Fashion*, I have endeavored, I hope not unsuccessfully, to illustrate in the quiet, natural, unpretending life of the really elegant and refined Von Wiegels with their friends the Murrays, each in their own degree. I know the Von Wiegels have few, if any, representatives in democratic New York, but I purposely connected them with high aristocratic circles in the Old World in order to show the difference between vulgar show and refined taste, always simple, easy, and void of all exaggeration—dressing well without attaching any importance to dress, or making it the subject of consideration on any and every occasion.

There is another remark which I desire to make before I lay down my pen—another prevailing folly of Irish-American society. I allude to the scarcely-concealed, and too often openly-paraded, contempt of everything *Irish*. Now, in the children of Irish parents this is in the worst possible taste, and is calculated to produce a very different effect from what they, doubtless, intend. So far from impressing people of other origins with respect for

themselves individually, they only excite their pity and contempt. Who ever hears the son or daughter of Scotch parents ridiculing Scotland or anything Scotch? Does the young American-Spaniard or Frenchman sneer at Spanish or French customs, or curl his moustached lip at the mention of Spain or France? Does not the American-German, whether of the first, second, or third generation, look back with proud affection to the glories and beauties of "Faderland?"

"I hear them speak of my Father-land,
And I feel like a mountain-child,
When they tell of the gallant Jager band,
And the chamois bounding wild.
Of the snow-capt hills to heaven that soar,
And the avalanche's fall,
Of the *chalet's* joys when the chase is o'er,
And the *Rans-des-Vaches* they call."

Such is the love of the German-Switzer born in distant climes for the land where his fathers lived and died.

And the French-Canadian of to-day, whose fathers came over with Cartier or Champlain, more than two hundred years ago, is as proud of the French blood in his veins as though he were born by the Seine or Loire instead of the St. Lawrence or the Ottawa. He still looks back with proud devotion to that "belle France" he has never seen and never may see.

And is Ireland less worthy of the love and fond remembrance of her children and their children

wherever Providence may have cast their lot? Is she not as beautiful, as romantic, as Scotland—are not her hills and her dales, her founts and streams, as classic as those of Germany or Switzerland? Have not valor and patriotism, and chivalrous devotion, illumined the darkest pages of her history? If France has her Bayard and Du Guesclin, and Spain her Cid and her Alonzo d'Aguilar, and Switzerland her Tell and Hofer, and Scotland her Wallace and her Bruce, has not Ireland her Art McMurrough, her Hugh O'Donnel, her Owen Roe, her Sarsfield? If England has her Alfred, Ireland has her Brian Borohme, as wise a king, as brave a leader, and as skilful a diplomatist. If other nations have their poets and orators, and men of letters, their painters and their sculptors, Ireland has hers as well. And where Christian fortitude and Christian faith are in question, what nation can show so bright a record, so fair a shield as long-suffering, much-enduring, ever-faithful Ireland?

Is it because she is unfortunate—doubtless for the furtherance of God's views on men—that her descendants in other climes should despise her? Shame on the degenerate spirit of Ireland's son or daughter that would even tacitly connive at so foul an injustice! They are unworthy of the race from which they spring—the “far-descended Gael”—they are a disgrace to the country that sent their fathers forth to battle bravely with the world.

One thing is certain—and our pseudo American-

Irish may believe me when I say it—that intelligent, well-bred foreigners who hear them deny the country of their ancestors—the cradle of their race—will set them down in their own hearts as sorry specimens of a noble race,—displaying by their mean toadyism to those of different origins, the lowness of their own extraction. For it is to be observed—and has been invariably remarked—that Irish *ladies* and Irish *gentlemen*—or those who have had the advantage of really *good society* in Ireland or elsewhere, are never ashamed of being Irish—never affect contempt for Ireland or the Irish, never seem to suppose that there is anything disgraceful in *being* Irish, and are, therefore, well content to *be* Irish, without aping the manners or adopting the sentiments of any other nation.

If there be any one class of persons for whom I, individually, entertain a thorough contempt, it is those—and unfortunately they are here “neither few nor far between,” who, with Irish blood in their veins, and Irish names for appellatives, take special delight on all occasions, public and private, in ridiculing “the Irish” and sneering at everything Irish, as though it were highly offensive to their olfactory nerve. The “*Pa and Ma’s Irish, but I can’t help that,*” is disgustingly prevalent in this country, and I would earnestly beg of all intelligent Irish parents, teachers, and, above all, priests, to set their faces against these ridiculous airs, and repress, by every means in their power, the growth of a

sentiment so unjust to an old and noble nation, so degrading to the people themselves, so subversive of every lofty and chivalrous feeling. Let the young sons and daughters of the Irish race in America be taught—not to laugh at Ireland through the exaggerated and unnatural caricatures drawn by her enemies for stage effect—not to encourage with their approbation the vulgar cant songs so common now-a-days (and differing entirely from the good *comic* songs which really represent Irish humor), which tend so strongly to foster a contempt for Ireland in the minds of the young,—but rather to study what Ireland was, and is, to see what Ireland and the Irish race have done, and so to judge of her claims to a share of the world's respect. If they be Catholics it will be easy to make them love and honor Ireland, and if they do not love and honor her, the fault is with those who have the training of them. French and Austrian, Polish and Spanish Catholics, and Italian, too, if they still have the faith of Christ, never mention Catholic Ireland without respect—they honor her as the mother of saints and martyrs, whose missionaries brought Gospel-truth not seldom to *their* pagan fathers. They are proud to acknowledge their indebtedness to the Irish Church, and willingly yield precedence to Ireland as their senior in the faith, and “the oldest Catholic nation in Western Europe.” It is reserved for American Catholics—too often the children of Irish parents—to look coldly and jealously on Ireland and frown down her claims.

These persons seem always desirous to place poor Ireland where Lord Mark Ker, a Governor of Berwick, in the olden time, would have placed the runaway General, Sir John Cope, what time he took French leave of his army, and left them to face the Highland host, as best they could for him :

“ I think you deserve the back o’ the gate
Get out o’ my sight this mornin’ !”

Even so it is with our would-be somebody American-Irish Catholics; they are forever sending Ireland to “the back o’ the gate,” and are mightily indignant because she will not go there, “and get out of their sight,” like an obedient spaniel when they bid her. Cry them mercy, there is still room for dear Old Ireland on the world’s stage, and she has true hearts to love her and minstrels to sing her praise, and orators to proclaim her rights, and a Church and an Altar on which the blight of heresy has never fallen.

Why, then, should not the descendants of the Catholic Irish in America love and honor the Old Land, when countless generations of their brave and pious ancestors calmly await the resurrection in the hallowed soil of Ireland? Why should they lend themselves to the senseless folly, the *un-Catholic* prejudice that here makes the word *Irish* synonymous with disgrace. Not that I would have them *love* America less as the great and free and noble country of their birth, but I would have them *respect* Ireland more than they do—I would have

them not to be ashamed of their Irish ancestry, or join in holding up their fatherland to the ridicule and contempt of others who are bound to it by no ties other than that of our common humanity. Let them only treat Ireland as the American French, or German, or Spanish, Swedes, Danes, or Norwegians, treat those several countries when they are mentioned in their presence—let them cherish the name and fame of their fatherland as those other races, even in America, do theirs—we ask or elaim no more.

One word more and I leave *Old and New* to the tender mercies of the public. It is often said by intelligent persons, not Irish, that we Irish claim too much at the hands of others. There may be some truth in the remark, but if there be, the fact is easily accounted for. If too much be claimed for Ireland, it is because *too little* is given her. Were people on this side the Atlantic willing to give Ireland her fair share of merit, they would hear less of Ireland's claims. By their affected contempt of a country and a people who, with all their faults, are entitled to respect, they make it incumbent on Irish writers and Irish orators to state the case in their own behalf. With these remarks I take my leave—for the present.

C.

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